



# Heralds of a *Brighter Day*

*by John W. V. Smith*

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# Heralds of a Brighter Day

*Biographical Sketches of Early Leaders  
in the  
Church of God Reformation Movement*

By  
John W. V. Smith

Gospel Trumpet Company  
*Publication Board of the Church of God*  
Anderson, Indiana

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*To*  
*DAD AND MOM*  
*Who were also pioneer heralds of*  
*a brighter day*



## *PREFACE*

This book is about people—five people, to be exact—whose earthly careers have been completed but whose lives continue to witness to succeeding generations of sincere seekers for truth. All five of them may be considered extraordinary in a sense, for they occupied key positions in the vanguard of a very significant movement in world Christianity during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth—a body now often designated as the Church of God reformation.

In another sense, however, these were very ordinary people. Along with many other men and women of their own day their chief distinguishing characteristics were nothing more than sincerity of heart, honesty of mind, piety of conduct and a real desire to fulfill the will of God insofar as they were able. While it is true that each of the five whose lives are herein sketched had particular talents of his own, it would be saying too much to ascribe to any one of them the designation of an outstanding genius. Each unquestionably made a significant contribution to the world in general and to the Christian church in particular, but there is little likelihood that any of these will ever be listed in the annals of history alongside Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley.

## PREFACE

Perhaps the greatest thing that can be said of these particular people is that they were possessed of a divine discontent with the condition of the Christian church as they found it, but they did not succumb to the temptation simply to sit on the side lines and criticize. By earnestly seeking the will of God in regard to the shortcomings they saw, they were able to see that the problems of the church were not insoluble. They saw the difficulties clearly, and they specialized in answers. They spent their lives in proclaiming the positive insights which they had envisioned. They were not prophets of doom; they were apostles of hope. Despite their feeling that the Christian church was in a chaotic and deplorable condition, their outlook was the occasion for great joy. Whether they defined it for themselves or not, a study of their lives and works reveals that they were indeed heralds of a brighter day for God's work in the world.

Daniel S. Warner, Enoch E. Byrum, Frederick G. Smith, Herbert M. Riggle, and Nora S. Hunter are five of many, many more who might have been chosen to represent the active leadership in this movement whose history stretches over three-quarters of a century and whose adherents have never been tabulated. These have been chosen, not because they were the most outstanding proclaimers of this brighter day for the people of God, nor even because they were the first to state specific aspects of this insight, but because their lives are representative of a host of others who have taken the lead in this movement for restoring the unity of the corporate witness of the saints.

In writing of men and women such as these there is a tendency either to overrate or to underrate the importance of the role which they played. The general

## PREFACE

high regard in which they have been held by the church, plus the exciting record of their accomplishments, provides ample reason for paying them high tribute. To emphasize their positive qualities only, however, to the exclusion of all else, would be to set these people on a pedestal of idealization which is perhaps unwarranted. It must be borne in mind that each of these persons was very human with his own weaknesses, faults, foibles and eccentricities. To emphasize these to the exclusion of other qualities would likewise be an injustice.

There has been a sincere attempt on the part of the writer of these sketches to avoid either extreme in emphasis and to present these leaders as they actually were—dedicated human instruments intent upon accomplishing God's purpose as they saw it. It is hoped that the story of their faith and courage and a re-evaluation of their insights will prove to be both interesting and inspiring.

The author is especially indebted to Sidney Warner, the son of D. S. Warner; Mrs. Sidney Warner, who is the former Mrs. F. G. Smith; Mrs. Minnie Riggle, widow of H. M. Riggle; and Mrs. Lucena Byrum, widow of E. E. Byrum. These persons were kind in supplying information and sharing firsthand impressions of four men included in this book.

John W. V. Smith

Anderson, Indiana





## *CONTENTS*

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	v
I. OF MEN AND MOVEMENTS . . . . .	11
II. D. S. WARNER . . . . .	17
III. ENOCH E. BYRUM . . . . .	51
IV. HERBERT M. RIGGLE . . . . .	76
V. FREDERICK G. SMITH . . . . .	100
VI. NORA S. HUNTER . . . . .	123



# Chapter One

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## *Of Men and Movements*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON once observed, "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." Often this has been true. Behind almost every undertaking there has been someone who had a dream of the enterprise which later developed. By hard work and persistence he strove to make that dream come true. In the course of time that which had been only a vision became a prosperous business, a great university, or any one of many other noble establishments. Almost without exception, it may be said, institutions are born within the mind of a single individual and develop along the lines envisioned by the strong man or woman who was responsible for starting the venture.

There are certain variations, however, in this general pattern of development. Some institutions, for instance, have grown out of the viewpoints and ideals of a man who had no intention of founding an institution. This has been particularly true of religious organizations. Very few of the denominations within the Christian church can be said to have been born out of an institutional dream. Among those who are regarded as the founders of the leading present-day bodies of Christians it is difficult to find even a single

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

one who thought in terms of promoting a separate organized group. An examination of the lives and writings of the great reformers of the sixteenth century reveals that the development of an organization around their ideas was the furthest thing from their thoughts. Such men as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli sought primarily to remedy some of the abuses which existed in the church in their time. The same could be said of George Fox, the great Quaker leader in the seventeenth century, and of John Wesley in the eighteenth century. None of these reformers had the development of an institution as their goal.

A study of the subsequent history of Protestantism, however, reveals that out of the work of these men separate religious organizations came into being, and not one, but several institutions have developed. Despite the fact that not a single one of these leaders intended to make himself the center of a new "church," each has been thrust into that position. Separate bodies of Christians carrying the label of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Wesleyan provide contemporary evidence that these men and their ideas have been institutionalized whether they intended it or not. Unintentionally, then, most religious bodies fall into the regular pattern and become the lengthened shadows of the men who founded them.

### *No "Lengthened Shadow"*

A religious movement which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, seems to be a notable exception to this tendency. This group has come to be known as the Church of God with general offices in Anderson, Indiana. Although in many respects it is similar to previous reform movements in

## OF MEN AND MOVEMENTS

the Christian church, and although a few of the early leaders stand out from all the rest, it cannot be said that the organized movement which eventually developed was the dream of any one of them. As a matter of fact, an organization of any kind was far from the thoughts of all of them. The point being made here, however, is that no single individual stands out as the originator of the ideals and concepts which furnished the motivation for the movement. Several people not directly associated with each other received at about the same time similar insights regarding a solution to one of the greatest ills of the church—sectarian division. As a few of those who had this insight began to preach and write, others also began to express themselves, and a movement was born.

This is not to say that the movement did not have its leaders, for indeed it did. Without those leaders, in fact, no movement would ever have developed. They played a most significant role. It needs to be said again, however, that the organizing principle of this movement was not the idea of any one man but the combined insight of many people who felt the burden of removing the barriers which separated Christians from each other and restoring the true unity of the body of Christ.

If anyone were to be singled out as the primary leader in this movement it probably would be D. S. Warner. His position of prominence was generally recognized by his contemporaries, both friend and foe. As a forceful preacher and as editor of the *Gospel Trumpet*, which played a major role in the development of the movement, he was able to wield considerable influence. Rival editors paid him the honor of referring to all who held views similar to those expressed in the *Trumpet* as "Warnerites." Subsequent

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

generations have not hesitated to give him credit as an outstanding pioneer.

In view of the outstanding leadership of this one man, it is nothing short of a miracle that the movement did not come to focus around his personality and continue as a projection of his ideas. In view also of the tendency of labels coined in ridicule to become permanent designations, it is a great wonder that Warner's name or the title of the paper he edited was not attached to the group in some fashion or other. Such groups as Methodists, Quakers, Dunkers, and Shakers were not so successful in escaping the derisive names attached by outsiders. Despite forces to the contrary, however, the movement was able to establish its identity and state its purpose in the simple and biblical designation, Church of God. The leaders made no exclusive claim to *being* the church; they regarded themselves as proclaimers of the unity of the church and sought to demonstrate within their own fellowship that their approach to the restoration of this unity was both sound and practicable.

It was the centrality of this message regarding the church which perhaps saved the movement from revolving about a man and his ideas. All of the early leaders, including Warner, strongly insisted that the truth which they proclaimed was in no sense the private property of any individual. They looked upon their message as not the idea of man but as the universal truth of God. They were not promoting an "ism," and they abhorred being called an "ite." They thrust themselves into the background and preached "thus saith the Lord." They had no organization to promote, but they had a message to share. That message was simply that every redeemed child of God was in the church of God and the joining of any

## OF MEN AND MOVEMENTS

other organization was unnecessary and even sinful.

In the light of these conditions, then, it may be said that this movement seems to be somewhat distinctive as compared with other reforming movements in Christianity. Instead of following the familiar pattern of the "lengthened shadow of one man," the continuing work of the Church of God has been the projection of certain fundamental truths which no man can take the credit for having invented. It is quite significant that no one in the whole history of the movement has been considered the infallible prophet. Even though the writings of some of the early leaders are read and respected they are not cited as authoritative. Excepting one pamphlet, entitled *The Church of God*, the books of a man even of the stature of Warner went out of print after his death and have not been republished. With only one other exception the same has been true of the writings of all the other leaders considered in this volume.\* The only writers who have been consistently quoted as authoritative by Church of God preachers are writers of the New Testament.

### *Guiding Lights*

It is thus apparent that a book about people associated with a movement such as this cannot deal with the early leaders as founding fathers but only as guiding lights. The role of these outstanding people has been primarily that of giving voice to, and channeling the efforts of, Christians all over the world who have seen the evil of Christian disunity and believe that the problem can be solved outside the denominational framework. They have contended that real unity can be achieved only by re-emphasizing the concept of

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\*The one exception is the recent publication of an abridgment of *What the Bible Teaches*, by F. G. Smith.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

the church held by the followers of Christ in the first century and upholding the same standards of holiness and purity of life as were held in the early church.

The leaders of this movement have not played the role of creed makers or ecclesiastical experts. Not many of the early preachers and writers were intellectuals, but almost all of them were students. Only two of the five whose lives are herein sketched ever attended college, and neither of them graduated with a degree. All of them were widely read, however, and made use of their knowledge of church history, historical theology, and biblical scholarship in developing the views which they held. Even so, it would not be possible to classify any of them as either scholarly theologians or geniuses at churchmanship.

In general it may be said, then, that those who came to the fore in this movement did so because they were sincere seekers for truth, saw the "light" in regard to the church, and were able to bring certain skills and personality assets to the task of proclaiming that a new day had dawned for the people of God. Because they comprehended a great truth which could not be contained, they found many and diverse ways to tell about it. Those who have become leaders have simply been those who have proved themselves effective in witnessing to that truth. Some have done so as preachers, some as writers and editors, and some as poets, song writers, and musicians. Others have witnessed effectively as theologians and teachers, and still others have taken their place as organizers for action. The only pattern which is discernible is that all have had three things in common—a redemptive experience in Christ, a vision of the universal church, and a spirit of joyful thanksgiving about the great work of God now evident among his people.



## Chapter Two

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### D. S. Warner

IN OCTOBER OF 1878 the name of D. S. Warner appeared on the masthead as associate editor of an obscure monthly periodical called the *Herald of Gospel Freedom*. This four-page paper, published at Wolcottville, Indiana, had been launched in January of that same year by a man named I. W. Lowman as a medium for promoting the gospel and the interests of a separated segment of the Winebrennerian Church of God known as the Northern Indiana Eldership. In a meeting at Beaver Dam on October 5, Warner had been admitted to membership in this group and at the same time was named associate editor of the *Herald*. His particular responsibility was to conduct a holiness department in the journal. Thus was inaugurated a connection with editing and publishing which was to throw this relatively unknown preacher of holiness into the very center of what later became a great religious movement.

Warner was not exactly a novice in the field of writing, however. He had already proved himself a capable author. In the more than ten years he had been in the ministry he had found time in his busy schedule to write numerous articles for the *Church Advocate*,

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

official publication of the General Eldership of the Churches of God in North America with which he was associated. His contributions had dealt with a variety of subjects, but all of his most recent articles were on a single topic—holiness. It was no mere happenstance that he was put in charge of this department of the new publication. He had already acquired a reputation in regard to this subject.

His intense interest in holiness, however, was a relatively recent development. Less than two years previous to this time he had been definitely opposed to the doctrine of sanctification and had been quite critical of those who advocated it. A number of factors entered into his change of attitude. His father-in-law was active in the holiness movement, and Warner's wife claimed the experience of sanctification. Through them Warner met others associated with the holiness cause and had opportunity to discuss the doctrine with many of them. By early 1877 he was at least willing to begin a re-examination of his previous judgment in regard to the doctrine. He studied the Scripture passages which were used to support the belief, and he sought counsel from those who preached it. The person who was, perhaps, most influential in leading him to full acceptance of this truth was a Baptist minister by the name of C. R. Dunbar who was at this time working with the Holiness Alliance.

### *Seeking a Deeper Experience*

These conversations were taking place in April of 1877. By summer Warner was preaching sermons on holiness, and by the first part of July he was so thoroughly convinced that the Bible taught entire sanctification as a "second work of grace" that he began to

seek the experience for himself. Despite the fact that he had been an evangelistic preacher for ten years and had seen over seven hundred people bow at the altar as a result of his ministry, he himself walked around to the public altar on the night of July 5, following one of his own sermons. Neither that night nor the next did he feel the assurance that he had found the experience which he sought, but on the third night he was able to record triumphantly in his diary, "Hallelujah, it is done!"

It did not take him long to shift the major emphasis of his ministry to the proclamation of this doctrine. Not only did he preach it but he also began to write about it. Within a week from the time he received the experience he notes, "Commenced article for the *Advocate* on sanctification." On July 28, two weeks later, he says, "Finished my second article on sanctification." Within months he was at work on the manuscript of a book on the same subject entitled, *Bible Proofs of a Second Work of Grace*. It is small wonder that he had so quickly acquired this reputation as a writer on holiness.

His connection with the *Herald of Gospel Freedom* soon developed into a more significant relationship. By the following March (1879) he had entered into full partnership with Lowman and was listed as joint editor and publisher of the magazine. A little over a year later he became sole editor of the *Herald* and was seeking to consolidate with some other holiness publication in order to expand. An offer came from a G. Haines in Indianapolis who was publishing a paper called *The Pilgrim*. On December 23, 1880, the Northern Indiana Eldership voted to merge their paper with Haines's magazine, with the two men forming a partnership in the venture. Instead of taking the name

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

of either of the journals the new paper, at Warner's suggestion, was given a new name. The first issue of the *Gospel Trumpet*, published in Rome City, Indiana, appeared on January 1, 1881. It was largely through the medium of this paper that the impact of Warner's subsequent work was to be felt in the world. Although he did not at this time know it, he was standing on the threshold of an exciting adventure for both himself and the whole Christian church.

As one looks back over the records of the earlier years of Warner's life it can be seen that his whole career up to this point was preparing him for the role he was to play during the next decade and a half. Although he was still relatively young, thirty-eight, he had had a wide variety of experience with more than his share of problems to solve and difficulties to overcome. He was ready to step into the place which he was called upon to occupy.

### *Early Years*

Daniel Sidney Warner was born June 25, 1842, in a small town in eastern Ohio, now known as Marshallville. The following year his father, David Warner, sold the tavern which he had been operating for eight years and moved the family to a 140-acre farm in Crawford County near New Washington. It was here that Warner spent his boyhood and youth.

He grew up in much the same fashion as other farm boys in that frontier community. He attended the ungraded school, worked hard, went coon hunting, took part in the neighborhood socials, and was known among his friends as something of a prankster, an entertainer of sorts, and a good public speaker. In the main, however, the early years of his life were somber and

unhappy. He was frail in body and had a number of physical weaknesses which seldom left him free from some kind of illness. His bodily miseries were supplemented by numerous agonies of mind. His father had retained the habit of partaking freely of the wares of the tavern even after he went out of that business. The conditions which usually prevail when a father is a drunkard were present in the Warner home. Although his mother made no profession of being a Christian during Warner's boyhood she was a kind and patient woman. Her life was hard, and with five other children, she found little extra time for her sickly son. This situation, coupled with his father's harsh treatment, made the young boy feel unwanted and insecure. The memory of his childhood was never pleasant to him. As he thought back on it in later years he poetically described himself in these doleful lines.

*A mother's heart oppressed with grief,  
A father's wicked spleen,  
Who cursed his faint and gasping breath;  
Combine to paint the scene.*

*He lived, though life was bitter gain,  
His youth a flood of tears,  
His body doomed to cruel pain,  
His mind to nervous fears.*

*He never knew that "Father" was  
A sweet, endearing name;  
Its very mention was a dread,  
His life's most deadly bane.*

*The demon of intemp'rance there  
Infused the wrath of hell,*

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

*And most upon this sickly head  
The storm of fury fell.*

*O Rum! thy red infernal flame—  
I witness to the truth—  
Filled all my mother's cup with pain,  
And swallowed up my youth.*

Despite his physical frailty he served for a period in the Union army during the Civil War. By 1863 the family had moved to Williams County in north-western Ohio. Shortly thereafter Joseph Warner, Daniel's older brother, received a call to military service. Since Joseph had a family and the government allowed for substitutes to be secured, it was decided that Daniel should go in his brother's place. For several months, then, he was a private in the Ohio Infantry. As soon as he was released he returned to his parent's home and became a country schoolteacher.

It was during this postwar period, while Warner was in his early twenties, that he first became genuinely concerned about religious matters. Having been reared in an almost completely irreligious atmosphere it is small wonder that his first reaction to things of the spirit was almost entirely negative. He revolted against the prevailing form of religion which he found in his community. For a time he declared himself an infidel. The fact that at about this same time he became romantically involved with Frances Stocking may have had something to do with his unbelief. He later said of her, "She was handsome and accomplished, having a very strong mind and a good education. Her father was skeptical, and the dire disease was transmitted to Frank and I think the whole family."

His rebellion, however, was apparently only superficial, for he never lost a keen sensitivity of conscience. Little by little he began to seek some of the answers which only Christianity can give. A series of seemingly unrelated events helped to bring the issues into focus for him. On a Sunday afternoon he joined with a group of other young people to sing. Among other things they sang some of the great hymns of the church. He loved to sing, for he had a fine tenor voice, but the words which went along with the music disturbed him greatly. On another occasion he went to a dance and did not get home until two o'clock in the morning. He loved to dance, but he was stricken in conscience when he found his mother waiting up to remind him that he had been selfishly seeking his own pleasure while his sister lay seriously ill at home.

### *In a Schoolhouse Meeting*

Not long after that a "protracted" meeting was started in a schoolhouse near his home. He attended several times with some of the other fellows in the community. One night in February of 1865 he announced to his friends that he was "going forward." They thought he was joking and expected him to pull some prank. But he was dead serious about it. He did go forward, as he had promised, but he did not pull any pranks. He earnestly sought to make his peace with God. He was genuinely converted. This experience changed the whole course of his life. "Thank God for that step," he later wrote. "Oh, how glad I am that it was ever my lot to become a Christian!"

From that time on he never ceased to be a sincere seeker for divine truth and a fearless follower of the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

will of God as he understood it. The affair with Frances Stocking troubled him some, for he had given her his promise of marriage. He asked to defer the event while he pursued his studies a few years. She apparently consented. He later reported, "I took the matter to the Lord and was soon confirmed in the belief that our marriage was not ordained of God. Our attachments grew weaker and soon correspondence ceased, and she became married to a rough young man by the name of Baker."

The plea that he wanted to spend a few years in his studies was no idle excuse, for that fall he enrolled in Oberlin, Ohio, College. He did not stay long, however, for the record shows that he spent that winter teaching at Corunna, Indiana. The following September, though, he was back at Oberlin, but once again he failed to complete the term. This time he did not leave to take a teaching position. For some time he had been struggling with the question of how God wanted him to spend his life. Some time during that fall of 1866 he found his answer. He felt definitely that God was calling him to the Christian ministry. He began his preparation immediately.

Whether Warner realized that he was then located in one of the strongest ministerial training centers in America it is hard to surmise. Charles G. Finney, the great evangelist, was just retiring as president of Oberlin and continued to teach in the seminary for several years. Warner undoubtedly had opportunity to hear him preach if not to sit in his classes. His lack of understanding of the usual requirements for ministerial preparation and his desire to get started as soon as possible led him to reject the opportunity available to him at Oberlin. It should also be noted that he had not yet affiliated with any religious group, so he had



no denominational requirements to pressure him into taking the formal training which would have required seven years. Whatever the reasons, he decided against staying at Oberlin and resolved to get his training the only other way he knew—through private study. He withdrew from school and arranged for a room at home where he spent most of the winter in studying the Scriptures and other books he had at his disposal.

It was not until the following spring that he had opportunity to do any preaching. The Methodists were holding a protracted meeting in the Cogswell school-house near his home. It was learned that he was entering the ministry, so he was invited to preach an evangelistic message. On Easter night of 1867 he delivered his first sermon.

Warner's choice of a religious body with which to affiliate was a deliberate matter. He examined the beliefs and practices of several of the denominations which had churches in his neighborhood and compared them with the interpretation of biblical truth which he had acquired from his own study. He eventually chose to join with a group known as the Church of God, a relatively small body which had been organized in 1825 by John Winebrenner, a former German Reformed minister, whose revivalistic techniques had forced him out of his native church. This group was officially known as the General Eldership of the Churches of God in North America, though the more common designation was the Winebrennerian Church of God. Warner was licensed to preach by the West Ohio Eldership in October of 1867.

The next ten years of his life were crowded with the kind of activities which the Christian ministry of that day demanded. He served in pastorates in north-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

western Ohio for six years, spent two years in pioneer mission work for his church in southeastern Nebraska, and then returned to Ohio for another pastoral appointment. The records show that he was hard working, diligent, conscientious, and more than moderately successful in his ministry.

Shortly before his ordination he had been married to Tamzen Ann Kerr whom he had met while teaching school. She was a devoted wife and apparently was both sympathetic and helpful in his ministry. Almost from the first, however, their marriage life seemed to be stalked by tragedy. Their first child, a boy, died soon after birth. In 1872 triplet daughters were born, but none of them survived. The young wife never completely recovered from complications resulting from this multiple birth and died shortly thereafter. The impact of this grief on Warner is revealed in an entry in his diary several months later as he thought back on his loss. At year's end he wrote:

One there was, the dearest of my earthly friends, who a year ago stood by my side, the joy of my life, the sweet, innocent object of my fervent love. But she is gone, that dear companion upon whose rosy cheek and harmless lips I used to impress the kiss of burning, never-dying love. O Tamzen! Thy heart and life, as pure as the white and fleecy snow that this morning covers thy peaceful resting place, has reared an everlasting monument in the hearts of all that knew thee on earth.

The records for the next seven years reveal more of the true character of this man than all the rest of the information combined. From November of 1872 to January of 1880 he kept a diary, most of which has been preserved. In this he recorded for each day not only the events which he considered significant but also his feelings, his concerns, and the struggles of his

mind. From the entries in this journal it is possible to catch a glimpse into the very soul of the man, to know him intimately and to capture the spirit of his work. This is especially important since these writings cover the period in which the concepts which identify him later as a leader in religious reform were beginning to take form.

His own record of these years tells the story of his devotion to the work to which he had been called. In towns and cities, in country schoolhouses, in private homes, in churches of his own denomination and in others when he had opportunity, in grove meetings and in tents, in all kinds of weather, in daytime meetings and in services that lasted until late at night, he was proclaiming the gospel of Christ. In the first six years of his ministry he reports that he had "preached all over northwest Ohio and some in two counties in Indiana, in all 1,241 sermons." He had seen 508 souls brought to the Lord.

Sometimes he tells of success and victory; at other times he speaks of hardship and failure. With equal candor he reports an 1871 revival in New Washington where "fifty-six were converted, forty-six baptized and forty-six fellowshipped into the organization," and a trip to Toledo the following year where he "walked nearly all day in search of a place to open a mission," and had to report, "No success." He tells of ministering to many individuals who were sick in body or soul, of rebuking a boy for "trying to pollute the house of God by spitting tobacco juice and quids on the floor," of helping to bring reconciliation between two people at variance, and of engaging in all kinds of discussions about religious matters. One entry closes with the simple statement: "Great row after meeting."

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

### *A Life of Prayer*

One of the most notable aspects of Warner's diary are the many references to his prayer life. He leaves little doubt as to his sincere desire to know and do the will of God. Many of the entries, in fact, are prayers in themselves. It seems that he often made this a time for phrasing some of his own deep spiritual yearnings. In one of the earliest preserved notations (November 11, 1872) he expresses what might well be called the theme of his whole life. "O Lord," he says, "guide thy servant to the place thou canst best use him."

He considered his prayer life sufficiently important to report it among the significant happenings of the day. In December of 1872 he says, "Spent the day in fasting and in much wrestling and prayer for poor souls under the guilt of sin." Many times he mentions going out alone to pray. It is not uncommon to encounter an entry similar to this one of March 13, 1872: "This morning I spent an hour rambling far out in the dense rolling forest to breathe the pure air and hold communion with my God." Another time he reports a forty-five mile buggy ride by saying, "The day passed off very pleasantly. Spent the time in meditation and singing praise to God." Keeping in contact with God was certainly no casual or hurried affair with him. The high light of one day's entry is that he "spent two hours in private room reading Testament and in prayer and meditation. It was a precious season."

One of the most moving of all his petitions is one recorded in 1877 shortly after he had begun to realize his need for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. On April 16 he wrote:

Since I arose this morning my constant prayer to God has been that he will lead me in all things. I pray God to

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

take me like an old sack and shake me until entirely empty, and then fill me with the fullness of himself. O God! turn out every nook and corner of my heart and purge me, soul, body, spirit, and mind. . . . I have this day examined my heart carefully and feel assured that I accept the whole will of God and now stand by faith upon the promise of God. I leave myself and all my concerns in his hands.

Later in that same year, December 13 to be exact, he was walking through the Ohio woods and meditating on Jeremiah 31:31 which reports God as saying, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." He fell to thinking about his own responsibility in regard to this new covenant. "I felt like entering more personally and formally into this covenant with the Almighty," he says. Accordingly he drew up a list of God's specific promises and then matched them with a list of promises of his own. Among other things he pledged:

This will is thy will, O God! . . . This body is thy temple forevermore. These hands shall work only for thee. . . . This tongue and these lips to speak only holiness unto the Lord. . . . And all my being is now and forever thine.

Not content with these generalities he then went on to write out the specific ways in which these promises would affect his life. In his everyday actions, in his attitudes toward possessions, toward his family, and toward life itself he would do nothing but glorify God. He considered it a solemn contract with God, "entered into by the direction of the Holy Spirit." He signed his full name to make it official. He later said, "God seemed present as though I was making an agreement with a person whom I could see by my side." There are indeed good grounds for Warner's son many years

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

later to say of him, "The thing that impressed me most about my father was his prayer life."

The pages of this diary also tell us a great deal about the personal interests, habits, and capacities of the man. We learn, for example, that he was always an early riser, that he was careful of his dress, and that he was concerned enough about personal cleanliness to bathe every morning (he says alternate mornings in one instance) in spite of the primitive conditions in rural Ohio and on the Nebraska prairies. We know also that he suffered from frequent headaches and had been judged to be consumptive, a condition from which he was later healed. It was because of his frequent illnesses, no doubt, that he was interested in matters of diet. This interest is illustrated by an entry in 1876. He had spent an afternoon reading a book on physiology and was promptly put under deep conviction regarding his own eating habits. "By the grace of God," he says, "from this day forth I will reform in quantity, etc., of food as much as my irregular mode of life will allow. . . . Thank God for this volume!" He was still working at the problem a year later. While a student at Vermillion College he wrote, "I was dull today. Study was a drag. . . . I was, as oft before, convinced that I ate too much, which stupefied my mind; hence resolved, as oft before, to quit gormandizing to gratify appetite." He later wrote a few articles on that theme in the *Gospel Trumpet* and occasionally included some dietary advice in his sermons.

Another of his interests during this period was phrenology—the then popular "science" of reading character according to the contours of the human head. He apparently first became interested in this subject in 1865 while he was teaching school. He heard a Dr. Everitt lecture on the subject and took notes. In

1873 he had opportunity to hear Everitt again and after being "examined" procured a character chart showing the traits associated with the various cranial "bumps." He also received an instruction sheet for making examinations. A few times after that he makes reference to phrenology but always in a very casual manner. For example, he refers to spending a stormy Sunday afternoon in May, 1875, with friends and passing the time off pleasantly with singing and other activities. He closes the account by saying, "Examined some heads." He apparently never regarded phrenology as more than an amusing pastime and in later years lost interest in it completely.

Almost everyone who ever knew Warner mentions that he was a great lover of nature. His diary certainly bears this out. The joy and closeness to God he felt as he rambled through the Ohio woods have already been mentioned. He found equal joy in walking across the Nebraska prairies, in riding horseback home from church on a moonlight night, in stopping at a prairie-dog town and paying "a leisurely visit among this brisk and numerous little folk," and in the feeling of exhilaration in the bursting life of spring after a long hard winter. He often describes graphically the various places he visited. A trip through the Colorado Rockies and on to the West Coast in 1892 impressed him so much that he took up considerable space in the *Gospel Trumpet* telling of the beauties he had been privileged to behold. One of his prized personal possessions was a collection of abalone shells to which he kept adding specimens as he had opportunity. He was always very sensitive to beauty and most appreciative of the wonders of God as they were manifest in the universe.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

### *A Steward of Time*

Another trait revealed in these intimate glimpses into Warner's life is an acute consciousness of the value of time. The entries on birthdays and at the end or beginning of a year evidence this particularly. Even before the beginning of his work as a reformer when he was so greatly concerned about doing all that was possible before time ran out, he had a profound sense of stewardship in regard to minutes as well as days and years. At year's end of 1872 he wrote, "Lord, help me to redeem the time. . . . Oh, that each hour of my short life may bring some good account at last, when life's conflict is o'er!"

Perhaps one of the most significant clues to Warner's true character, however, is that throughout the whole of this record there runs a stream of real tenderness and deep devotion to others which indicate a great capacity to love. Many times he speaks of fasting and praying all day for "poor lost sinners." There is never an indication that anyone, even his enemies, was excluded from his love. His capacity to love is, however, best revealed in his feelings toward those closest to him—his family.

After the death of Tamzen in 1872 he remained unmarried for over two years. Shortly before he left for his mission in Nebraska in 1873, however, he had arranged for a continuing correspondence with a young lady from Upper Sandusky, Ohio, by the name of Sarah A. Keller. His ability as a writer apparently produced results, for he returned to Ohio the following summer and married her in June.

The year he spent alone in Nebraska was a busy one but very lonely. The winter months we know very little about, since a portion of the diary has not



been found. By March, however, the exchange of letters with Sarah had apparently brought definite plans into being, and he was getting anxious to bring them to completion. He expressed his feelings in this fashion:

Last night I had a precious dream of meeting my angel love, Sarah. . . . O Lord, what a blessing thou hast here bestowed on thy unworthy servant! What a bliss to me, that I should thus be loved, and that, too, by the very creature that I would rather have love me than any fair female in all the world! O Lord, this is thy doing and it is wonderful in our eyes.

As spring came on the prairies, the young man's fancy (he was thirty-one) turned more and more to thoughts of love.

The approach of summer gladdens my heart because it is bringing us near the happy time when I shall be joined in holy matrimony with . . . Sarah, whose constant and ardent love is worth more to me than all the treasures and honor of earth.

In early May he paused one day in a beautiful grove along the banks of the South Blue. The beauty of the spot turned his thoughts to Sarah. "I wondered," he wrote, "if I should ever have the pleasure of crossing through this beautiful grove with my lovely Sadie, who of course is always brought to my mind when I meet anything that is lovely and beautiful." Two ducks swimming in the water, a cooing dove near by, and even the stream itself reminded him that two lives "were soon to blend fully into one to follow on in everlasting love."

On May 19 he started back toward Ohio. "This is the morning I have been thinking about so long," he sighed. He arrived at Upper Sandusky on the twenty-third. In the entry for that day he does not reveal all that happened, but he concludes with a prayer of thanks-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

giving: "Thank the kind Lord for his care and protection over us through these eleven long months that we have been so far, far apart." On his wedding day he took time to note that the birds were singing sweeter than they ever had before. At four in the afternoon he and the not quite nineteen-year-old Sarah were joined in marriage. "God bless our union and make us together happy and useful," was his closing prayer for the day.

### *Pioneering in Nebraska*

Within a very short time these expressions of love and affection were to be put to the test as to whether they were genuine or mere sentiment. In a little over a month he and his young bride were on their way back to Nebraska. Almost immediately it became apparent that married life for them was not going to be a romantic holiday. They found the churches in a discouraging condition. Interest was lagging, and most of the plans which Warner had laid before leaving had failed to materialize. A critical item on this list was the completion of a house he had started with the expectation of finishing it quickly and taking his wife into their new home. The pathos of the situation is pungently set forth in a note for September 18:

Tried to get lumber on time, but could not. Felt very much cast down. No money yet from the Board. Friends in the East have no sympathy for us. Brethren here have no means. Winter is coming on soon and no home for my dear Sarah and me!

In the very depths of despair they turned to some of the faithful people for help. A Brother Green offered them his north room, "with cellar privileges," and they gratefully accepted. Here they apparently spent the

winter. This did not, however, solve all their problems. Sarah could not accompany her husband as he traveled to all fourteen of his preaching places, so there were many tearful farewells. The quality of his love is indicated in one of his entries: "O God, must I tear myself away from the dear wife bathed in tears? But 'tis the cause of Christ and I must go. O Lord, comfort her loving heart."

On March 18, 1875, the Warners became the parents of a daughter, Levilla Modest. Entries for the following weeks reveal very clearly the kind of loving concern he had for his family. On the twentieth he wrote, "Great weakness of back from stooping continually over the bed taking care of dear wife and babe." On the twenty-third he opined, "Have taken a bad cold, being up so much of nights." A week later, however, he seems to have been taking things more in stride, for he simply noted, "Pitched into housework as usual."

Warner's attachment to his loved ones was always deep and tender—a fact which several times brought him great sorrow. The entries which tell of the death of his mother in July, 1876, and of his father and three-year-old Levilla at almost the same time in June of 1878 are touching revelations of his deep suffering. When circumstances several years later (1884) brought an estrangement from his beloved Sarah, the blow was almost too much for him. It is said that in one long sleepless night during the time of this crisis a portion of his hair turned gray.

His capacity to love and trust was not confined to his family, however. Through all his life he had many close friends. Though he sometimes wanted to be alone he was no recluse. He found his greatest joy in being with people. Those with whom he worked and associated he trusted implicitly, sometimes to his sorrow,

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

as was the case with some of his partners in the publishing business. But every time someone let him down it struck a cruel blow to his sensitive soul. In 1877, for instance, after his return to Ohio, he was literally stunned when some of those whom he loved and in whom he had confidence were parties to filing charges against his ministry. His diary shows that he could hardly believe what was apparently true.

As I heard the names of the dear brethren read over that were appended to those letters I had strange feelings. I truly felt myself in a queer world. Never in my life did my reasoning powers receive such a dreadful shock. I felt myself sinking, then looked to Jesus, and all was calm and peaceful again.

### *Crucial Years*

In many ways the years of 1877 and 1878 were probably the most crucial in Warner's life. As already noted it was in July of 1877 that he had received the experience of entire sanctification. His enthusiasm in proclaiming this doctrine and his co-operation with other ministers in the National Holiness Association soon brought criticism from some of his colleagues in the West Ohio Eldership. By September formal charges were brought against him by W. H. Oliver. He was accused of inviting a "sect of fanatics calling themselves the Holy Alliance Band to hold meetings in the local Churches of God," of bringing schism among those churches, of slighting the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and foot washing by taking less than one hour to observe them, and of stating that he had been preaching his own doctrine even prior to his experience of sanctification. His "case" was heard by the Eldership and the charges were sustained, but he was recommended favorably for renewal of his license

on the condition that he not bring holiness workers to hold meetings in the Churches of God without their consent. Warner agreed to the restriction and was assigned a circuit in the Canton area.

Hardly had he arrived on his assigned circuit until he felt that it was not God's will that he should be there. He was strongly impressed to spend full time in evangelistic work. So he resigned his circuit in November and moved his family to Upper Sandusky to the home of his wife's parents. By December he was in a revival in Findlay, Ohio, which, incidentally, was being conducted in the courthouse because opposition had developed in the local Church of God after the second night. It did not take long for the Eldership to act. On January 30, 1878, he was brought to trial and expelled. The formal charges were as follows: (1) transcending the restrictions of the Eldership, (2) violating rules of co-operation, and (3) participating in dividing the church. In the words of Warner, however, he was disfellowshipped "for preaching full salvation, for following the Holy Spirit, and for helping to save over 150 souls" in Findlay.

The next day, upon hearing that his license had been withheld, he expressed the feeling that from the standpoint of his attachment to the Church of God and her principles this decision was a "dreadful calamity and intolerable to bear," but that he had the sweet assurance that, in his own words, "... my dear Father, to whom I belonged, would turn this and everything else (as long as I stay on the altar) to my good and his glory. Praise his holy name!"

As he thought further about the meaning of this action in relation to his own ministry he, apparently for the first time, began to see the implications of what he had been preaching for the whole of Christianity.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

That the light began to dawn on this crucial day is indicated by a diary entry over a month later. On March 7 he wrote:

On the 31st of last January the Lord showed me that holiness could never prosper upon sectarian soil encumbered by human creeds and party names, and he gave me a new commission to join holiness and all truth together and build up the apostolic church of the living God. Praise his name! I will obey him.

Warner obviously did not at the time realize the full import of his insight. He had no strategy for carrying out his resolution, and he had no way of knowing that others whom he had not yet met were beginning to think along these same lines. The "new commission" was interpreted strictly in terms of his own ministry. No "reformation" was launched and, apparently, none was contemplated. It was not until October of 1881, three years and nine months later, that he took the lead in starting anything which even resembled a distinct movement. It was several years after this, probably not before the early 1890's, that he really began to think of his work in terms of a structured movement for the promotion of an ongoing reformation in the church. Even then, others were probably more responsible for promoting a movement consciousness than Warner ever was.

The years following that January day in 1878 were by no means idle ones. He had made up his mind to be a holiness evangelist, and he set himself to that task. He went wherever he had calls, and these were not lacking. He went from city to city and from one country schoolhouse to another, preaching holiness. Sometimes he did not wait for a call but made his own opportunity. He took advantage of every situation. On one of his trips during the summer of that same year

he and his wife were involved in a runaway-horse accident. Sarah received some injuries and was taken to a farm home near by. Several of the neighbors came to see what the excitement was all about. Warner reports, "A small congregation gathered and I preached a short discourse, of course on holiness."

It was during that summer also that great sorrow again came into his life. After a prolonged illness his father died on June 16. While waiting for the funeral he received a telegram that his daughter was seriously ill. He left immediately to go to the bedside of his three-year-old Levilla. A few days later she died. Her funeral was held on June 25, his thirty-sixth birthday. In September he himself became so seriously ill with what he describes as "bilious remittent fever and an attack of hemorrhage of the lungs," that friends and even a physician were much alarmed about him. But God still had work for him to do. By October he was again able to enter into evangelistic work.

Warner was not content, however, to continue as a lone preacher. He definitely could not be called an "independent." He had prayed, "God save the church," too many times to sever himself from his brethren. A diary entry in March of 1878 seems to indicate that he might have considered forming a group of his own, for he speaks of organizing an unattached congregation of the Church of God. No further reference is made to this experiment, so it may be assumed that he did nothing more about it. His main concern at this time seems to have been to find a group with which he could affiliate and where he would be free to preach the message that was on his heart.

Some calls for evangelistic meetings in Indiana brought him in contact with a group which seemed to answer this need. It was the Northern Indiana Elder-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

ship of the Churches of God, a branch of the same church from which he had been expelled. This body had broken fellowship with the General Eldership over the matter of secret societies and did not object to the preaching of holiness. The better acquainted Warner became with this group the more convinced he was that with it he could feel at home. Accordingly he made a great effort to attend their Eldership meeting in October, even though he was still weak from his illness. It was at this meeting that he was both accepted into their fellowship and made associate editor of the *Herald of Gospel Freedom*.

While affiliated with the Northern Indiana Eldership Warner, along with his editorial and evangelistic pursuits, became the chief promoter of a proposal to merge the Eldership with the United Mennonite Church. He had come in contact with some of the ministers of the Mennonite group and was impressed with the similarity of their ideas. In speaking of one such contact in August of 1879 he says, "I pray God we may become one fold." In September he visited the meeting of their Conference and was instrumental in getting them to appoint a delegate to attend a meeting of the Northern Indiana Eldership. By December a joint meeting of official representatives from the two groups had been arranged and resolutions for a merger were formulated. The records do not indicate the final outcome of this proposal. The two bodies apparently never worked out a suitable arrangement. Warner, however, remained on friendly terms with these brethren, for his first book, *Bible Proofs of a Second Work of Grace*, was published in Goshen in 1880 by the Mennonite Publishing House.

During this period Warner never lost sight of his "new commission," for he continued to oppose sec-



tarianism and to uphold holiness. He was still floundering, however, as to the proper method for accomplishing what he felt God had called him to do. Although he was never free from misgivings, his dual affiliation with the Northern Indiana Eldership and the National Holiness Association seemed to provide a satisfactory arrangement, at least for a time. Neither of these groups attempted to throttle either his preaching or his editorial activity, so he had no cause to be particularly unhappy with either of them.

### *Warner Cuts Some Ties*

By early 1881, however, he was beginning to feel uneasy about these relationships. The first to be called into question was his membership in the Holiness Association. He was especially concerned about the clause in the organization's constitution which stipulated that "it shall consist of members of various Christian organizations and seek to work in harmony with all these societies." One day in April while in Hardinsburg, Indiana, he, with two of his brethren, spent a day in prayer about this matter. He came out of that prayer meeting with some definite conclusions. "The Spirit of the Lord showed me," he says, "the inconsistency of repudiating sects and yet belonging to an association that is based on sect recognition. We promised God to withdraw from all such compacts."

Shortly thereafter he went to a meeting of the Holiness Association in Terre Haute and introduced a resolution to have the "sect endorsing clause" removed from the constitution. He suggested a substitute wording which would make membership in the Association open to "all true Christians everywhere." The sub-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

stitute clause was defeated. On June 1 Warner reported this incident in the *Gospel Trumpet* and then declared:

And now we wish to announce to all that we wish to co-operate with all Christians, as such, in saving souls—but forever withdraw from all organisms that uphold and endorse sects and denominations in the body of Christ.

In the months that followed, his affiliation with the Northern Indiana Eldership came in for the same kind of scrutiny—and he came to the same conclusion. In October he attended a meeting of the Eldership in Beaver Dam, Indiana. He told them of his convictions and declared that he could no longer conscientiously remain a part of their fellowship. In a dramatic moment he asked if there were others who would also take their stand as being free from all sectarian division. Five people stood up. Together they walked out of the meeting—and out of sectism forever. This small group from Beaver Dam became the first congregation of the Church of God. Later that same month a second group took a similar step at Carson City, Michigan.

These severing incidents marked the beginning of a new era in Warner's career. The inward struggle with inconsistencies was over. He quit looking for a suitable church home. His spiritual floundering was past. He had found the freedom in Christ for which he had so long sought. A new ingredient entered his life. It was as if he had been released from a great load and for the first time was able to stand erect. He felt as though he had stepped from the condemnatory shadow of his own and all other sectarian walls and now stood in the full light of truth—the "evening" light of which the prophet Zechariah had spoken. There was indeed cause for rejoicing. God had begun a new work in the church.

Almost immediately a new note of exuberant joy and a new sense of urgency were evident in all that Warner did. He turned to the Scriptures for further corroboration of the truth he comprehended. He had studied the Bible for years, but now he began to see in its pages a great unfolding drama of revealed truth, and he sought to grasp it more perfectly. His writing became different. He had long been recognized as proficient, but now he wrote with a vigor of expression and a positiveness which he had never before shown. He had a new interest in music. All his life he had liked to sing, but now he had a new song—many new songs, in fact, which he himself composed. He expressed it well when he wrote, "There's Music in My Soul." Even his preaching became different. The quality of his sermonizing was generally recognized as being superior, but now he had new reasons for proclaiming the "good news." Not only had God revealed himself in Christ; he was now revealing himself anew in the church composed of all the redeemed.

### *A Joyful People*

This "new ingredient" manifested itself in all these ways, but its best expression undoubtedly came in the many song lyrics which Warner and others composed in the next few years. His own testimony is well stated in these words penned in 1887:

*O Jesus, to my heart so sweet,  
Thy Word's a light unto my feet;  
How holy, happy, and complete!  
I walk in the precious light.*

*In the light of God,  
Now my soul is singing,*

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

*All, all is bright;  
In the light of God,  
I'm now in the light of God.*

The very titles suggest the spirit in which the words are written. Note such as these: "The Happy People," "I've Found It Lord in Thee," "Everlasting Joy," "Fire in the Soul," and "There Is Joy in the Service of the Master."

In some of these songs there is a spirit of unrestrained jubilation. It is hard to find a more exultant outpouring than is expressed in these lines:

*Since I have found my Savior, bowed to his control,  
There's everlasting music ringing in my soul.*

*Since I have been translated, heaven's anthems roll  
In sweet accord with joyful music in my soul.*

*There is music in my soul, O there is music in my soul;  
'Tis my glory ever singing, "Heaven's balm has made  
me whole."*

*There is music in my soul, O let the happy tidings roll!  
Let it roll, let it roll; O there's music in my soul.*

Equally joyful is his own witness to the truth of the words of Jesus when he said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

*I've tried the road of sin and found  
Its prospects all deceive;  
I've proved the Lord, and joys abound,  
More than I could believe.*

*His yoke is easy, his burden is light;  
I've found it so, I've found it so.  
His service is my sweetest delight;  
His blessings ever flow.*

Not all his rejoicing is at this high pitch. He also knows the joy that comes in quietness and deep communion with the Eternal. The metaphor of the "river of peace" in Isaiah 66:12 inspired him to write in a mood of joyful devotion a song with that title. Perhaps the greatest of his poetic expressions in this vein, however, is, "My Soul Is Satisfied." Feel the depth of faith and feeling in these words:

*All my soul can wish forever I now find in Christ  
replete;  
Every blessing and the Giver in my peaceful bosom  
meet.*

*Can a bird drink up the ocean, thirsting still from  
shore to shore?*

*Or the God of all creation leave my heart yet craving  
more?*

*My soul is satisfied; my soul is satisfied;  
I am complete in Jesus' love, and my soul is satisfied.*

The record of events subsequent to Warner's withdrawal from the Eldership indicates that his spiritual rejoicing cannot be attributed to external conditions. Had he not been thoroughly convinced that he had acted according to the will of God he might have doubted the wisdom of having cut himself off from the groups with which he had been associated, for the difficulties began to mount. Some of his associates turned

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

against him. Haines, his partner in the *Gospel Trumpet*, withdrew from the partnership and demanded more money than Warner thought was due him, then went elsewhere in the city of Indianapolis and started an opposition paper. The struggle to keep the *Trumpet* going was a worry from which he did not escape for several years. The office was located in no less than six cities during Warner's lifetime. Each of these moves—from Rome City to Indianapolis to Cardington to Bucyrus to Williamston to Grand Junction—was made in an effort to better conditions.

In the midst of all the difficulties associated with keeping the paper going Warner suffered what was undoubtedly the greatest emotional shock of his entire life. His wife left him. When the move was made from Bucyrus, Ohio, to Williamston, Michigan, in 1884 the "lovely Sadie" did not go along. The immediate cause of the separation was an incident growing out of Sarah's desire for Warner to sell the *Gospel Trumpet* and of his refusal on the basis that he did not feel it was God's will to do so.

Behind this incident, however, is the influence of a young man by the name of R. S. Stockwell who had given some assistance to Warner in the publication work at Bucyrus. He had developed a "third work" idea, which he defined as marital celibacy, and had convinced Sarah that true holiness could never be achieved without taking this additional step. It was his idea that Warner sell the *Trumpet*, and he had apparently enlisted the aid of Warner's wife in getting him to do it. His plan failed, but the crisis produced the separation, and Warner's home was broken up. Sarah relinquished custody of Sidney, their three-year-old son, and spurned Warner's later attempts at reconciliation. She obtained a divorce on grounds of

desertion and later remarried. It is probably safe to say that Warner never fully recovered from the shock of this separation, though he married again in 1893 after he learned of the death of Sarah. His new wife, Frankie Miller, was a member of his evangelistic company and was a great help to him in his later years. Even so, some of his poetry written during this time of crisis, and later, reveals the deep hurt inflicted by the breakup of his home.

### *Important Work to Do*

The remaining busy years of Warner's life, however, hardly left time for brooding. He felt he had important work to do, and he believed that it must be done quickly, for time was running out. Warner was convinced that he was living in the "last days" and the end of the world was not far distant. Some have quoted him as saying he expected the Lord to come during his lifetime. By January of 1895, however, he seems to have revised his opinion somewhat, for he wrote that it was his conviction "that perhaps as much as forty years more may elapse ere the Judge of all shall proclaim the end of time." Even so, it may safely be said that he constantly lived and worked under the compulsion of the shortness of time.

This sense of great urgency drove Warner to do more than it seemed possible for his frail body to endure. He was almost continually engaged in evangelistic meetings, sometimes preaching two or three times a day. This in itself was a notable achievement, considering the fact that sermons in those days were seldom less than two hours in length. He spent February and March of 1885 on an evangelistic tour of Iowa and Missouri. Later that same year he experimented with

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

an evangelistic technique which was to prove successful and form the pattern of activity for many others. This was the evangelistic company, which was a specialized troupe of preachers and singers who went from place to place conducting revival campaigns. Warner's own team, consisting of himself, "Mother" Sarah Smith, Nannie Kigar, Frances (Frankie) Miller, and Barney Warren, functioned for several years and traveled throughout most of the midwestern and southern states and in Ontario, Canada. They continued to evangelize despite economic difficulties, persecution, hostile mobs, and inclement weather. They held meetings in whatever churches they could procure, in rented halls, in homes, in tents, in school-houses, and in groves and brush arbors. Theirs was indeed a "flying ministry."

From a personal standpoint it was chiefly this inner conviction of urgency which kept Warner going. References to his physical weakness are few and merely incidental. Nevertheless, the number of times these casual references are made indicates how he kept going in spite of his own discomfort. More than once he mentions taking the pulpit when he felt so ill or weak he could hardly stand, but once the sermon was started he forgot all about his difficulty. He also sometimes mentions some doubts he had about his ability to make long walks in bad weather, but without exception he reports that the Lord gave him strength to make the journey. Severe headaches, lack of funds, and a hundred other things would have stopped his work had he not been literally driven by his strong feeling that quick action was necessary.

During all this time Warner also kept up his responsibilities as editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* and did a great deal of writing. Most of this editorial work was



done late at night. Because he had to work so much at night he designed a special adjustable lamp to go over the desk in his office in Grand Junction. The vigor of his editorials and of his reports from the field indicate that the weariness of his body did not affect his mind. It is clear that he continued to search for a greater revelation of God's truth as long as he lived.

Warner was never content with doing things in a small way. To ensure the spread of the truth he made personal tours into many parts of the country. Even before his evangelistic company disbanded in the early 1890's he made several long trips by himself, including one to Colorado. Later he went to the West Coast and did some evangelistic work in California. In 1894 he speaks of his hope to make a tour around the world. Whereas most of his early ministry had been in small towns and rural areas, his interest in the later years, particularly after 1892, was also turned toward the evangelization of cities. There was no limit to his vision or to his persistence in making his dream come true.

His career was cut short when he succumbed to an attack of pneumonia on December 12, 1895. He was only fifty-three, but a tremendous amount of service to God had been packed into those few short years.

It is hard to summarize or make a short evaluation of the contribution of D. S. Warner, for the impact of his influence can never be fully ascertained. An intimate study of his life, such as this has been intended to be, reveals that not all his ideas were right and not all his actions were perfect. He had his weaknesses and his limitations. Such a study also reveals that he had his strengths—strengths which tower high above his failures and shortcomings. One cannot become well acquainted with this man's life without feeling that he has come in contact with a great soul.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

His contributions to Christianity are many, but if one single greatest contribution were to be selected it would probably be his vision of the unity of the church and the method for achieving it. Those who knew him say this was the major theme of his preaching. It is reported that one year at the Grand Junction camp meeting he preached for four hours and ten minutes on "The Scattering and Gathering of the Church." Whatever he may have said in that half-day-long sermon, he could not have portrayed his vision more vividly than he had already done several years before when he wrote:

*Brighter days are sweetly dawning,  
O the glory looms in sight!  
For the cloudy day is waning,  
And the ev'ning shall be light.*

*Lo! the ransomed are returning,  
Robed in shining crystal white,  
Leaping, shouting home to Zion,  
Happy in the ev'ning light.*

*Free from Babel, in the Spirit,  
Free to worship God aright,  
Joy and gladness we're receiving;  
O how sweet this ev'ning light!*

*Hallelujah! saints are singing  
Vict'ry in Jehovah's might;  
Glory! glory! keep it ringing,  
We are saved in ev'ning light.*

*O what golden glory streaming!  
Purer light is coming fast;  
Now in Christ we've found a freedom  
Which eternally shall last.*

## Chapter Three

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### *Enoch E. Byrum*

"SOME ARE BORN GREAT, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em." The last phrase of this observation by the Shakespearean character, Olivia, is a fitting description of the man who, one writer has said, ranks second only to Warner in significance as a leader in the Church of God. If ever there was a person who attained a position of recognized leadership without seeking it and who was often called to assume important responsibilities in spite of his own protests it was Enoch Edwin Byrum.

This sensitive and bashful Indiana farm boy was in truth literally thrust into one of the most responsible leadership posts which then existed in the rapidly growing reformation movement. Without any specialized training, without a period of apprenticeship, and with practically no knowledge whatever of the involvements of the job, he became, on June 21, 1887, publisher and business manager of the *Gospel Trumpet*. He had had no experience in operating a business of any kind, he had never kept books except his own personal accounts, and, in his own words, he "hadn't been around a printing press more than two hours" in his whole life. More than this, he was being called

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

upon to publish a religious paper, though he had very little knowledge of Bible doctrine. He knew practically nothing about the Church of God, having become acquainted with the movement only a matter of months prior to this time. He was attending his first Church of God camp meeting at Bangor, Michigan, when D. S. Warner asked him if he would accept this position.

This rather abrupt invitation was occasioned by an emergency in the publishing office. J. C. Fisher, who had been ably serving as publisher and manager for most of the three years the *Trumpet* had been in Michigan, had become involved in marital difficulties. He was divorcing his wife, Allie, and marrying another woman. Since such behavior was not considered in keeping with Bible standards, Warner, just prior to the Bangor camp meeting, had asked Fisher to leave. The situation was complicated by the fact that Fisher owned a one-third interest in the business which he at first refused to sell, apparently hoping to force Warner to sell out to him. He later changed his mind, however, and agreed to relinquish his share for one thousand dollars, which was considered by Warner as a rather high figure. In order to avert further trouble, Warner and the others agreed to meet these terms despite the fact there was no cash on hand.

To find a suitable successor to Fisher under these circumstances was not easy. Not only must the new manager be capable of carrying on the work, he must also be able to assume financial responsibility for the interest in the business being relinquished by Fisher. Such an "investment" could hardly be called attractive. There was no guarantee of any return and none was anticipated. There would be no salary connected with the position since all the workers connected with

the publishing business donated their services, receiving only subsistence and shelter. Moreover, the Company still owed several hundred dollars on the Grand Junction property, and whoever took the position would have the job of paying off this debt in addition to meeting current expenses. It was to accept this kind of position that the twenty-five-year-old E. E. Byrum was called. Warner knew nothing about him but had extended the invitation on the recommendation of Henry C. Wickersham, a cousin of Byrum's.

There was one point, however, and a very important one, at which young Byrum could qualify for this responsibility. He had some money. A few weeks previous to this time he had received a payment of nine hundred dollars from the sale of the family farm. This sum was available for immediate use. Just how much this fact, of which Wickersham was undoubtedly aware, entered into the extending of the invitation to Byrum will perhaps never be known. More significant is the additional fact that Byrum apparently never raised the question as to whether he should risk his money in such a shaky enterprise. He made his decision on other grounds. After Warner had put the matter before him he met with a number of the brethren on the campground, and the whole situation was discussed. In regard to this meeting Byrum later wrote:

As the condition and needs were presented there were two things especially which were weighty matters for my consideration: first, my incompetency and lack of knowledge of the responsibilities before me; second, it was my desire to be sure that it was the will of God for me to assume such responsibilities. It was at this point that the Spirit of the Lord reminded me of my consecration a few years previously that when the Lord called me I would go, no matter what it might be.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

After spending an evening in prayer and meditation about the matter he gave the brethren an affirmative answer the next morning. In so doing he forfeited his plans for an interesting summer of travel and study in the East and altered the whole course of his life. The day after the Bangor camp meeting was over he rode the seven miles down to Grand Junction in a wagon and stepped out into his new responsibilities. Thus began a career of service to God and the church which was to continue without interruption for more than half a century.

### *From a Christian Home*

Though still young and without experience in anything except farming, Byrum was not unacquainted with the Christian faith and its meaning in his own life. Even before his birth on October 13, 1861, his parents, Eli and Lucinda Byrum, had been devout Christians. They reared their large family in a sincerely Christian atmosphere with regular times for worship and Bible reading. From his early childhood Enoch was religiously inclined. He attended Sunday school and church regularly in the United Brethren church near the family home in Randolph County along the eastern border of Indiana. While still a boy he read the Bible all the way through; that he received one dollar as a prize for doing so in an allotted time is perhaps incidental. At fifteen, in a schoolhouse revival, he had a definite conversion experience. He seems not to have had any major spiritual struggle in regard to choosing the right way of life, though he did go to the public altar every night for a week before he received assurance of salvation. When it came to con-

secrating for definite Christian service, however, the hurdle was not so easy.

Soon after his conversion Byrum began to work in the church. At sixteen he was teaching a Sunday school class of junior and intermediate boys. He did other things in the church as he had opportunity. But it was not long until he began to feel that God was calling him for some specific work. The only kinds of full-time Christian service about which he knew at that time were preaching and being a missionary to Africa. He had no particular desire and certainly did not feel qualified to do either. Nevertheless, he could not dismiss the call from his mind. For some time he wrestled with the problem. The matter came to a head one afternoon while he was plowing. He would stop the team at the end of each furrow and kneel down in a fence corner and pray, earnestly asking the Lord whether he could not be excused from this kind of consecration. He felt utterly incapable of ever preaching a sermon or teaching the heathen. But he found no peace. The Lord did not seem to be impressed by his excuses. The situation became desperate. Finally he made a conditional consecration. "After many prayers and earnest pleadings," he said, "I yielded by telling the Lord that if he would only open the way for me to go to school, whenever he called me I would go and would preach, go to Africa, or whatever he called me to do I would do it." He then adds, "A wonderful relief came to me and my heavy burden was gone."

In making such a consecration eighteen-year-old Byrum undoubtedly thought that he was postponing the matter indefinitely, for further schooling at that particular time seemed utterly out of the question. He was the seventh of thirteen children, and even under normal conditions, financing a college education would

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

have been difficult. His parents, however, had been interested in giving their children every advantage possible, and some of the older boys had been able to go away to college. A way probably would have been found for Enoch to do likewise had circumstances not intervened.

Shortly after Byrum's conversion experience his father had died. Since he was the oldest boy still at home the task of operating the farm and providing for the six members of the family who were still there fell on his shoulders. In spite of his youth he had apparently done quite well, for in three years he had been able to meet expenses and accumulate enough to purchase a one-third interest in the farm for himself. It would be another five years, though, before either of his younger brothers would be old enough to assume the responsibilities which he carried. There certainly was little immediate possibility for him to continue his education.

The very next day after his consecration, however, things began to happen. His older brother, Fletcher, whose wife had died a few months earlier, came and announced that he had sold his own farm and would be willing to help with the family responsibilities. Enoch immediately saw this as his opportunity to go to school. Within the next few days arrangements had been made for Fletcher to buy Enoch's interest in the farm and to take over full responsibility for the family. Just one week from the time of his consecration he was enrolled in Ridgeville College, nine miles from his home.

The next six years were spent in trying to further his education, though there were several interruptions because of ill health and the necessity of returning to



the farm to work. He completed a twelve weeks' term at Ridgeville and went back for ten weeks the next year. After a lapse of three years he went to Eastern Indiana Normal School but was forced to drop out because of illness. The next year he went to Valparaiso University and studied there for about a year and a half, completing a short course in "elocution and oratory." He then went to Otterbein University, a United Brethren school, where in June of 1887 he finished a one-year course in Sunday school work and Bible study. He had planned to go back to Otterbein that fall and enroll for a two-year literary course and then go to Dayton, Ohio, and do at least two years of study at Bonebrake Theological Seminary. But those plans were changed.

It was while Enoch was away in school that the Byrum family first came into contact with the Church of God. An evangelist and a company of workers held a series of meetings at Prospect Chapel, a United Brethren meetinghouse, just two and one-half miles away from the Byrum home. The preaching on holiness and on the sin of sectism created a considerable stir in the community, with the result that several of the members of this church requested that their names be dropped from the classbook. They began holding services in a wagon shed not far from the chapel. Among those who "came out" were Enoch's brother, Fletcher, and his mother.

### *News like a Thunderbolt*

When Enoch heard about this incident he was shocked. "The news came to me like a thunderbolt," he says. He immediately wrote home warning them about being led astray. He attempted to write an ar-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

ticle for his church paper exposing the errors of these people, but he found difficulty in marshaling his arguments. On his next trip home he noted some rather sharp contrasts between the lives and the spirit of those who still worshiped at Prospect Chapel and those who were holding services in the wagon shed. Within a few months he was convinced that the doctrine of sanctification was biblical, and he began to seek the experience. When he came home for Christmas vacation in 1886 he found a Church of God revival meeting in progress. By this time his search had gone far enough. He knew that his consecration was complete. Without any great emotional upheaval he quietly accepted the Holy Spirit into his life and said, "I am sanctified."

After going back to school Byrum made up his mind to find out more about these Church of God people, so as soon as the term was over he, along with John C. Mayne, a fellow student, boarded the train for the camp meeting at Bangor. The thing which seemed to impress him most as he attended these meetings was the spirit of joy which pervaded the camp. As a college man he was quick to note that some of the sermons had more "demonstration" than content, but he could not escape the contagious inspiration which accompanied the singing and all the other activities. Though Byrum himself was never given to outward demonstrations it was undoubtedly this spirit of genuine praise arising out of a fresh experience of contact with God which made him receptive to the offer made by Warner and the other brethren a few days later. By the time they approached him he apparently had already made up his mind that these were the people with whom he belonged. He regarded the offer as simply an opportunity to respond to the consecration he had

made six years before. He accepted it with fear and trembling but also with a sense of calling and an assurance that he was doing the will of God.

Byrum's initiation into the publishing business was rigorous. Warner spent only ten days in the office with him and then left on an evangelistic tour which lasted until the following April. Bert Spaulding, the book-keeper and office manager, stayed only a few weeks and then moved to another part of the state. Within three weeks after he arrived Enoch had the business all to himself with only two experienced helpers, the office girls, Celia Kilpatrick and Rhoda Keagy. These two girls, incidentally, each later became Mrs. E. E. Byrum. He married Celia on March 4, 1888. After a rather long illness she died on December 11 of the same year. In June, 1889, he married Rhoda. She lived until 1907 and was the mother of Byrum's six children.

Despite his inexperience Byrum proved to be an excellent businessman. His quiet manner and methodical persistence brought a stability to the *Gospel Trumpet* which it had not known before. He put all operations on a much more businesslike basis and was able to replace some of the worn-out equipment in addition to paying off the debt on the Grand Junction property. It was not all smooth sailing, however. More than once the time for meeting obligations came without any apparent means of meeting them. It was Byrum's custom to lean heavily on the Lord in such emergencies, and a way to handle the situation was always found. At one time in 1894 he stopped the presses for an hour each Tuesday to have all the workers join in prayer for a special need. The need was met after three such sessions. In an article in the December 27, 1894, issue of the *Trumpet* Byrum summed up the struggles through which they had

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

passed: "A faith work cannot be carried on without an abundance of chances to have tests of faith. Many times our faith has been tested to the utmost, but the Lord always got glory out of it in some way."

After Byrum came to the office Warner spent a considerable amount of his time in evangelistic work. He wrote regularly for the *Trumpet*, but he was not there to select and reject the various articles which came in. More and more of the editorial responsibilities fell on Byrum. By 1895 his name was listed on the masthead as associate editor as well as publisher. It was only natural that upon Warner's death in December of that year Byrum should become the editor of the publication, which only increased the responsibilities he already had.

The expansion of the publishing work during the time Byrum was associated with it is nothing short of phenomenal. In addition to the *Trumpet*, which had become a weekly in 1893, the Company had over sixty books and tracts in publication by 1895. The general growth is indicated somewhat by the amount of railroad equipment necessary to transport the Company in its various moves. The move from Williamston to Grand Junction in 1886, a few months before Byrum's arrival, had required a single freight car. The move to Moundsville, West Virginia, in 1898 was made in a special train, consisting of nine freight cars, a baggage car, and two passenger coaches. When the Company transferred to Anderson, Indiana in 1906, the equipment filled twenty-six freight cars. Expansion was even more rapid after the move to Anderson.

After becoming editor Byrum found others who could competently handle some of the details of the publishing work and he began to spend more time on the "field." Even as Warner had done he viewed the

*Trumpet* not as an independent venture but as an instrument of a great movement. He sought to keep in close personal touch with developments all over the country and to be an actual participant in the work of spreading the truth. A quick look at his activities during the next several years would find him in Spokane, Washington, doing house to house visitation; in Louisville, Kentucky, praying for railroad fare; in West Virginia walking twenty miles back into the hills to pray for a sick man; in Louisiana preaching to a crowd that had gathered to mob him; and in many other states visiting camp meetings and holding evangelistic services.

A similar look around the world would catch glimpses of him handing out tracts which would lead to the conversion of a jailer in Honduras, preaching to the workers on a banana plantation in Costa Rica, visiting churches in Canada, searching through libraries in Europe, traveling through the historic lands of the Bible, baptizing eighteen persons one afternoon in a river in Assam as a part of his eight-thousand-mile journey through India, or preaching the gospel through interpreters in many other lands. Many of the places he visited later became locations for missionary activity.

### *Influential Leader*

Through his position as editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* and because of the deeply spiritual quality of his life Byrum gained the respect of the church. Everywhere he was looked upon as a leader. Even though he was not a proficient speaker he was in constant demand for camp meetings and revivals. He was also called upon to make many important decisions in local churches

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

as well as in regional meetings and on the national level. It is at this point that Byrum seems to have played an important role in a critical stage of the history of the Church of God.

E. E. Byrum was in this strategic position of leadership at a time when the movement of which he was a part had begun to consolidate and define itself more specifically. He himself was a part of that process. He was called upon many times in various parts of the United States, in Canada, and in other countries to help decide whether or not certain individuals were worthy of the continued confidence and fellowship of the brethren. He became the number one trouble shooter for the church. As often as not on such occasions the decision would be negative, for Byrum was not one to let down the standard at any point. If a person were not doctrinally "straight," if he showed signs of compromise either with the world or with sectism, or if he were not "measuring up" to accepted standards in regard to dress or behavior, he was forthwith "set aside" and declared "out of harmony with the brethren." Because of the high respect given him Byrum's recommendations were usually followed. As editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* he had the final word anyway since he had the power of either accepting or rejecting reports and articles for the church paper.

In handling such matters Byrum tended to be conservative and sometimes rather arbitrary. He saw issues as either black or white, with few shades of gray in between. His guide for truth was a combination of biblical commands and his own ability at "discernment." Because of his passion to act always in accordance with God's will he preferred to be accused of fanaticism rather than to take chances on departing from the "narrow way." Consequently, he was more

ready to align himself with the "stricter" brethren than Warner had been. He was inclined to spell out the "truth" more specifically, both to insure unity in doctrine and practice and to avoid being led into error. It is perhaps no accident, then, that it was during the time of his leadership that the church became much concerned, and not a little agitated, over such items as modest dress and proper forms of entertainment. Though Byrum himself remained aloof from petty controversy, there seems to be little doubt that his attitude regarding such questionable matters led to legalistic definitions of what was right and what was wrong which sowed the seeds of controversy.

Although these legalistic definitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often involved matters which would now be regarded as inconsequential, and although some may have been disfellowshipped who, with a bit of loving understanding and tolerance, would have been kept in the movement, this "holding the line" type of attitude is not to be regarded as altogether unwholesome. The uncompromising stand for unadulterated truth taken by Byrum and others undoubtedly saved the movement from being led astray in regard to some very crucial matters. The challenge made by the "anticleansing heresy" is perhaps the most striking example of the threat of adulteration.

Byrum had been editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* hardly three years when a number of the leading ministers in the movement fell under the influence of "Zinzen-dorfism," the teaching that justification and release from the carnal nature were secured at the same time, thus making it unnecessary for any further cleansing to be done at the time of sanctification. The second work was seen only as a baptism or a sealing by the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

Holy Spirit. Upon first becoming aware that this doctrine was being accepted by some of the brethren Byrum lost no time in branding it. In an editorial in the November 10, 1898, issue of the *Gospel Trumpet* he wrote:

... We do not hesitate in calling the doctrine a heresy—a doctrine of the devils. We do not say by this that every one who has been pondering the question is of the Devil, but we do say that a person cannot take up with such a doctrine and teach it and bring other souls under the influence of the enemy in that way after having the light of the Word of God on that line and keep the grace of God in his soul.

The issue came to sharp focus in the Moundsville camp meeting of 1899. Byrum's firm stand, supported by other strong leaders, made the issue clear-cut. The "heretics" could either abandon their false doctrine or get out. Several of them chose the latter. In the words of a report in the *Trumpet* following this meeting, "Most of those under the false teaching left the ground, and the work of God went on with power." It has been estimated that perhaps half of the leading ministers left the movement over this matter, although many of them made public repentance and returned within the next few years. Though the editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* was by no means the only opponent of this "heresy," a great deal of the credit for preserving within the movement a clear and definite teaching on the vital doctrine of sanctification goes to E. E. Byrum.

In the midst of all his other activities Byrum found time to do a considerable amount of writing. In fact, from the standpoint of volume he is one of the most prolific writers the movement has produced. In ad-



dition to the uncounted pages he wrote for the *Gospel Trumpet* over a period of fifty years he was the author of at least eighteen books and booklets. Most of these volumes had a rather wide circulation, and many of them went through several printings. Although accurate figures regarding the number of copies of his books which were printed are not available a conservative estimate would be in excess of half a million.

His first book appeared in 1892. It was entitled *Divine Healing of Soul and Body*.<sup>\*</sup> Having felt the need for a publication on this subject he compiled about fifty testimonies of those who had experienced physical and spiritual healing and added some chapters of instruction and biblical support. By 1898 twenty thousand copies of this book had been sold and a new edition was issued. In 1919 he rewrote the book entirely and published it under the title, *Miracles and Healing*. He wrote two other books dealing specifically with this topic and mentioned it more than casually in most of the rest of them.

The two most widely circulated of Byrum's books were *The Secret of Salvation*, first published in 1896, and *The Christian's Treasure*, which appeared in 1937. The first of these, a book of many short chapters giving simple instructions based on Scripture texts on how to be saved and how to keep saved, sold forty thousand copies in the first five years. It later appeared in paper-bound editions and was circulated even more widely. The total figure is unknown but at least 100,000 copies are known to have been issued. The second of these popular books con-

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<sup>\*</sup>In *Life Experiences* Byrum says *The Boy's Companion* was his first book, but the copyright date on this book is 1893, a year later than *Divine Healing*. It is possible that an uncopyrighted edition had been issued earlier.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

sisted altogether of Scripture passages dealing with various personal problems and printed one to each page in large display type. At the time of his death Byrum was working on a project to distribute a million copies of a paper-bound edition of this book to the men and women in military service during World War II. Just how many were actually sent out is not known.

Other books authored by Byrum which proved to be quite popular were *What Shall I Do to Be Saved?* *Startling Incidents*, *The Ordinances of the Bible*, and *Riches of Grace*. In 1928 he published an autobiographical book entitled, *Life Experiences*. His last book was *Thoughts on the Life of Faith*, published in 1940.

Byrum's books are not heavy reading. None of them could be called scholarly. He wrote simply and in a very practical vein, dealing mostly with everyday problems in spiritual living. A number of his books are made up of testimonies, both from his own experience and that of others. The recurrent theme in all of his writing is expressed in part of the title of his last book. Basic and genuine Christianity to him was not a theory; it was simply a "life of faith."

As this brief survey of his writings indicates, Byrum was a sincere believer in guidance by the Holy Spirit. If any one characteristic about his whole life stands out more than others it is his sensitivity to "the leadings of the Lord." In his own private life he could almost be classed as a mystic. God was so real to him that he expected to be able to know the divine will in regard to every matter. He regarded dreams, impressions, and circumstances as possible means used by God to reveal himself. His writings contain reference after reference to occasions when

he received guidance in some supernatural way. The most used expressions in all his experiential accounts are "The Lord showed me—" and "I was impressed—."

### *Leaning Heavily on the Lord*

Very early in his Christian life he developed the practice of leaning heavily on the Lord in matters great and small. Whether he needed two thousand dollars by the next day to pay for a new press or desired to read the secondhand newspaper on the train seat in front of him, he resorted to prayer and expected his petition to be granted. (Incidentally, he did get both of these items.) As might be expected, a man who got all his answers directly from the Lord was liable sometimes to be arbitrary and uncompromising in his opinions. He was always reluctant to admit that his "impressions" might have come from some source other than the Lord—and if the Lord had spoken, what use was there to discuss the matter further?

Believing as strongly as he did in the principle of direct revelation, it was an easy step to the conclusion that no formal preparation was necessary for work in the kingdom of God. Despite the fact that he had as much or more formal education than anyone else in the movement, at the time he took over the editorship he apparently had reached the conclusion that gaining formal education was an unnecessary procedure. Shortly before the death of Warner, classes in music, penmanship, and Bible study had been started for the workers in the Trumpet Home. A report in the December 5, 1895, issue of the paper says that these classes are progressing nicely with

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

about fifty enrolled. In the December 26 issue, after Warner's death on the twelfth, the new editor writes: "Some have asked if we have a theological school here. We answer 'No,' neither do we expect to have." He does add that they do meet for Bible readings.

Byrum was true to his word. No educational ventures were started in the Church of God until the year following his retirement from the editorship. It is to his credit, however, that once the Bible Training School in Anderson was on its way he did not actively oppose it. In the memorial issue of the *Gospel Trumpet* following Byrum's death an article by Earl Martin appeared under the title, "Anderson College Loses a Friend." That was a true statement. Whether he intended it or not, two of the major buildings which he constructed in Anderson—the Trumpet Workers' Home and the Old People's Home—are now part of Anderson College, and even his residence is being utilized as a music hall.

### *Ministry to the Sick*

The most prominent way in which Byrum's dependence on direct action from God was manifested, though, was in regard to divine physical healing. As a matter of fact, it would be proper to say that his position of world-wide respect rested largely on this aspect of his work. There is no denying that throughout most of his ministry this doctrine was his chief interest. It is said that in his later years he might start a sermon on almost any subject, but he always ended preaching on divine healing. This same observation would not be altogether out of place in regard to his early ministry either.

His interest in this aspect of the gospel had first

been aroused while he was still at home on the Indiana farm. His sister had contracted an "incurable" disease—tuberculosis—and had died as a result of it. Within a short time he himself had begun to show signs of being infected with the same malady. His health declined rapidly, and he realized that unless he got help from somewhere he would have only a brief time to live. He consulted several doctors, but the medical profession could offer him little hope at that time. He began to search elsewhere for help.

He had been taught that the day of miracles was over and that divine physical healing had ceased with the apostles. He began to study his New Testament, however, and discovered that many passages indicated that the promises of God were not limited to any particular period in history. In fact, he found what seemed to him pretty strong evidence that the privilege was just as available in the present as it had ever been in the past. He noted that the manifestations of healing in the first century were conditioned by faith, and so he reasoned that the exercise of that same kind of faith today should produce the same results. He decided to put the matter to a test in his own case. He describes what happened:

Not knowing how to pray the prayer of faith I knelt alone in my room and talked to the Lord as I would have talked to a friend and told him that I believed his Word and that he could heal me. Then and there I placed my case in his hands to heal me, and I believed he would do it.

His faith was tested several times, but within a month he says he was practically well and was never bothered by even symptoms of the disease after that. A short time later, while still in school, he testifies to being healed of a serious eye affliction. "From that time," he says, "I was convinced that the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

Lord would heal any kind of sickness or disease in answer to the prayer of faith, although at that time I had never heard a sermon preached on the subject of divine healing." He later stated that the first sermon he ever heard on the subject was one he himself preached.

The doctrine of divine healing was not new in the Church of God. Warner and other ministers had been preaching it for several years, but no special emphasis had been placed on it. In the months that followed Byrum's arrival, however, there was a gradual increase in the number of people who were able to give definite testimonies of healing, and the subject came to be discussed around the office more than it had been before. Byrum took part in the discussions and was often involved in incidents where the sick were prayed for and healed. By 1892 his activities in praying for the sick and in leading public services were recognized by the brethren, and he was ordained to the ministry in the month of August.

The next two or three years saw an increasing emphasis on the doctrine throughout the church, owing in part, no doubt, to the wide circulation of Byrum's book on the subject. In the Grand Junction camp meeting of 1895 a number of outstanding answers to prayer took place. It was during this meeting that Byrum became convinced that God had endowed him with a special gift of healing faith. He had some doubts and misgivings, however, about claiming such a power, so he talked privately to Warner about the matter. Warner listened attentively and then solemnly responded, "Brother Byrum, this is of God." A few moments later he laid his hands on Byrum's head and thanked God for the bestowal of such a gift. In describing this sacred moment Byrum says:

As he did so I felt an inward consciousness of the approval of the Lord but no unusual outpouring of his Spirit. But it seemed that my faith had quietly laid hold upon the promises of God with an unusual authority and firmness.

Soon after this Byrum began writing a regular column on divine healing in the *Gospel Trumpet*. His book on the subject was well known also. So by the time he came to the editorship he had already established himself as something of an authority on healing.

After taking such a bold stand on this matter Byrum was quite sensitive about statements by any of his brethren which seemed to be contrary to his own beliefs. One such incident about which he was greatly concerned happened shortly before Warner's death. While the associate editor was on the West Coast the editor had written an article in which he indicated that the Scriptures did not seem to condemn the use of "natural remedies," and that it was not necessary for us to "ask God to do for us by his divine power what we could do with remedies he had placed within our reach and given us knowledge to use." Byrum apparently took Warner to task about this article and got him to admit that he might have been wrong. Even though Warner died shortly thereafter, Byrum felt compelled to set the record straight. On January 2, 1896, he wrote in the *Gospel Trumpet*:

During our absence in October an article was published in the *Trumpet* in which the brother who wrote it lowered the standard below Bible line while trying to expose certain lines of fanaticism, and since that time the Lord has plainly showed him that he had lowered the standard and that fanaticism can be rebuked in strongest terms and yet a radical stand taken upon the Bible truth.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

There was another challenge to his standard which caused him some concern. Byrum's faith for physical healing was rooted squarely in biblical teaching. He took the Scriptures for what they said. Consequently, he was disturbed not a little when he became aware that some of the Bible scholars raised questions concerning the authenticity of the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel. They had observed that these verses were not included in the oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

For Byrum, the passage, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," was too precious to be so easily set aside. He wanted to find out for himself. Accordingly, when he made his world tour in 1904 with A. D. Khan he made it a point to visit as many of the major libraries of Europe as he could and to examine the oldest New Testament manuscripts which they possessed. In Oxford, in London, in Paris, in Venice, and in Rome the two of them pored over these ancient documents.

In the British Museum they checked the Codex Alexandrinus, coming from the fifth century, and were gratified to find the entire passage. In many other manuscripts in all of the libraries their faith was bolstered when they found that the disputed verses were included. When they visited the Vatican Library in Rome, however, and examined the Codex Vaticanus, one of the two oldest New Testament manuscripts known to exist, dating back to the fourth century, they were disappointed. The last twelve verses were missing. But Byrum did note something peculiar about this part of the manuscript. Between Mark 16:8 and the beginning of the Gospel of Luke there was a blank space with sufficient room to write in the missing verses. "This showed," said Byrum,



"that the scribe knew of its existence." He was more convinced when he discovered that no other blank spaces at the end of books appeared in the document.

There was one other manuscript he wanted to see. That was Codex Sinaiticus, probably the oldest known New Testament manuscript, dating from early in the fourth century. This document was then located in Russia, and they were not able to visit that country, so Byrum sent for photostatic copies of the pages containing the ending of Mark and the beginning of Luke. He found that here too the last twelve verses were missing, but, as in Vaticanus, space was left where they might be included. After all this effort Byrum was satisfied. He concluded: "In view of these facts and the statement made by Matthew (28:18-20), there is but little room for skepticism in regard to the precious commission given by our Master as recorded by St. Mark." Incidentally, the Sinaiticus photostats procured by Byrum are now in the possession of the library of the Graduate School of Theology in Anderson, Indiana.

As the years passed Byrum's ministry to the sick expanded and became more important to him. Wherever he went in his extensive travels he told people about God's power to heal and he prayed for those who needed help. He witnessed many remarkable answers to prayer. A tremendous number of prayer requests poured into the Trumpet office daily. He made personal visits to many of these afflicted people and to many others he sent anointed handkerchiefs as a token of his faith for their healing.

In 1916 Byrum was given the opportunity to spend full time in the healing ministry. He was relieved of his editorial responsibilities in June of that year, though he retained the office of president of the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

Company for some time after that. F. G. Smith was chosen to succeed him as editor of the *Gospel Trumpet*.

Byrum's work, however, was by no means over. In a sense it had just begun. For the next several years his travels totaled around forty thousand miles each year. On many of these trips he was accompanied by his wife. After the death of Rhoda, his second wife, he had married Lucena Beardsley in October of 1908. She also had been a worker in the Trumpet Home, coming to Moundsville in 1904 from the state of Washington. After helping rear Byrum's children she became an ordained minister, and the two of them traveled extensively, preaching and praying for the sick wherever they went.

Through the last quarter century of his life Byrum continued to perform a major aspect of his ministry through the *Gospel Trumpet*. Along with the writing of several more books and tracts and contributing numerous articles for publication he became the director of what was called the Spiritual Service Department. He had an office in the Trumpet building and handled all the prayer requests which came in. He answered literally hundreds of letters each year from people who were experiencing spiritual difficulty or needed some kind of help. He kept up this work faithfully, even into his old age, and was regularly in his office until just a few days before his death in January, 1942, at the age of eighty.

Thus ended the career of another herald of a brighter day. But Byrum was a "herald" of a different type. Warner and others had been the prophetic type, proclaiming from every vantage point a message of joyful expectancy in regard to the church. Byrum was more of the priestly type, quietly working out details and ministering to the people. Like Moses, he

had difficulty in public speech, and also like Moses he laid down some rather strict laws and led the people through some very trying times in the "wilderness." He joined with the others in saying, "God has great things in store for the church," and then he stretched out a hand to every suffering and troubled individual and added, "God has great things in store for you."

## Chapter Four

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*Herbert M. Riggle*

ONE DAY IN THE FALL OF 1893 a spring wagon rolled into the small town of Richmond, Pennsylvania. In it were four people. As they alighted in front of the hotel a crowd began to gather on the streets. One reporter said, "It was as though Barnum's circus had come." There was a buzz of excitement and a spirit of expectancy was in the air, for it had been rumored that these people were coming to town to preach a "new and strange doctrine." Already preparation had been made for their coming. Arrangements had been made to use the largest building in town, the skating rink, and seats had been installed to accommodate about a thousand people.

The excitement might well have died down when the townsfolk saw the people who were supposed to be the cause of it. The party consisted of three women and a man, or more properly, three girls and a boy. There was nothing particularly distinctive about them, and they had not come from some far-off place. All of them had come from homes in surrounding communities not many miles away. The two girls on the back seat were Belle Sheldon of Blanco, Pennsylvania, and Ora Howard of near-by North Point.

In the front sat a nineteen-year-old girl from Cochran's Mills, Pennsylvania, and her twenty-one-year-old husband who did not look a day over seventeen. This was the Herbert McClellan Riggle Evangelistic Company. They had come to town to hold a meeting. They launched their campaign that night with a full house.

This evangelistic team had been formed only a few weeks before at neighboring Georgetown where Riggle and his wife, the former Minnie Shellhammer, were holding the second revival meeting in which they had ever engaged. The two of them had started a series of services there and had later been joined by the other two young women who gave assistance in singing and in many other ways. This Georgetown meeting had lasted four weeks. For the first half of the period nothing had happened, but on Sunday night of the second week things "broke loose." Six young women were converted in that one service. In the following two weeks more than sixty bowed at the altar seeking salvation. In the words of Riggle:

People sometimes fell upon their knees at their seats during the sermon and began to call upon the Lord for mercy. Usually seekers came forward weeping and trembling, and sometimes we could scarcely find room for them. The Lord wrought gloriously in our midst. . . . Sectarians opposed, while the brethren shouted aloud for the joy and gladness which filled their hearts.

Reports from this meeting had been heard in Richmond, ten miles away, and so the people there were eager to see these people who had caused all the excitement and were just curious enough to want to be on hand should anything interesting develop in their own community. They apparently were not disappointed, for things began to happen from the very first night. In regard to this meeting Riggle

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

says, "Reports flew thick and fast, and calls came from every direction."

This was the phenomenal beginning of the ministerial career of a man who for almost sixty years was to distinguish himself, glorify God, and serve the church as an evangelist, pastor, writer, missionary, administrator, and respected leader in the Church of God.

Herbert M. Riggle was born February 18, 1872, in a log house near Cochran's Mills in western Pennsylvania. His parents, George and Mary Riggle, were farmers. Herbert, their only child, grew up with full awareness of all the work that was necessary to make one hundred and eight acres of Pennsylvania hill country support a family and pay off the mortgage. He tells how he sometimes worked by moonlight as well as from sunup to sundown. Apparently the family was not overly prosperous, for Herbert never had a riding horse or a buggy of his own, as did some of the other boys in the neighborhood. He did manage to get his full quota of studies in the common school, and by the age of seventeen had completed one "branch" of high school work. This was all the formal schooling he ever had.

From early childhood Herbert was given instruction in religious matters. His parents were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and they brought up their son according to the pattern of that group. At the proper ages he was baptized and taught the catechism. His mother's interpretation of Christianity, however, was colored somewhat by the fact that she had been converted in a Wesleyan revival. Riggle says that she was "a Lutheran by marriage only." He often speaks of her piety and the influence she exerted on his life. She would read the

Bible to him and instruct him in the right way to live. Although he did not immediately respond to this teaching, it had a tremendous effect on him. Even as a boy he had dreams of becoming a minister and would play "preacher" when his parents were away or he was alone in the woods.

### *A Boy's Religious Struggles*

This is not to say, of course, that young Riggle was a meek little soul who spent his time meditating on the Sunday school lesson. He was a very normal youngster and apparently kept up with the rest of the boys in neighborhood devilment. In fact, he may have been ahead of some of the others, for later in life he often spoke of how "wicked" he was as a youth and of being deeply "steeped in sin." His real difficulty, however, seems to have centered in himself. He had a terrible temper which he found it difficult to control. He would often give vent to his anger by abusing the livestock around the farm. He was also inclined to be a bit rebellious when things did not go to suit him, and he was seldom very quiet about his protests. Though small for his age he had a big mouth and strong lungs which he freely used in voicing his displeasure. In moments of reflection he found no difficulty in seeing plenty of internal evidence that he was not the kind of boy he ought to be.

In addition to the Evangelical Lutheran, another church in the neighborhood exerted an influence on Riggle during his boyhood. This was a combination Wesleyan Methodist-Mennonite Brethren in Christ group which had been formed because of the shortage of meetinghouses. These people disagreed with each other on certain minor points, but in the main they

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

stood together. They taught the necessity for a definite conversion experience and upheld the "Bible standard of holiness." Riggle was impressed with the quality of life demonstrated by those who worshiped with this group. At one time in one of their revivals he had gone to the "mourner's bench" but did not experience any spiritual change. He talked to his own minister about conversion and was told baptism as an infant had made him a Christian, and he had nothing more to worry about. There the matter rested for some time.

In the year that Riggle was sixteen, though, something happened which gave him more to think about. During the winter of 1888-89 two itinerant preachers, George T. Clayton and Charles Koonce, came to the community and began to hold revival services. They preached all the things the Wesleyan-Mennonite group had ever preached—and more. They not only upheld the doctrine of personal holiness, but also they pointed out that sectarian divisions were wrong and that all true Christians should separate themselves from this "sin." Young Herbert Riggle was much impressed by the implications of this teaching when he saw one of the neighbors by the name of Jacob Shellhammer, a Mennonite Brethren man, go to the altar on the second night. He was close enough to hear the conversation which took place. He reports what was said:

Brother Clayton asked him, "Have you come to be saved?" "No," he replied, "I am saved." "Do you desire to consecrate for entire sanctification?" "No, I am sanctified." "Then what are you here for?" I shall never forget the reply: "I am here to consecrate out of sect-Babylon."

Thus Jacob Shellhammer was the first person in that



community to take his stand in the "evening light." He later came to influence Riggle's life a great deal.

This was not the last the Riggle boy heard about this "new doctrine." A few weeks later D. S. Warner arrived in the neighborhood with his evangelistic company. The preaching and the singing—especially the singing—brought Riggle back to the meetings night after night. Still later other evangelists preaching the same thing visited that area. Riggle heard strong sermons from such men as A. J. Kilpatrick, S. L. Speck, J. A. Dillon, and W. G. Schell. He was convinced that what they preached was the truth, but he did not do anything about it at that time. He retained his profession of being a Christian and made light of these strange preachers and the people who followed them. Deep in his heart, though, he admired them and agreed with the doctrine which they preached.

After hearing this new message at different times over a period of more than two years both the elder Riggles and their son began attending the congregation of the Church of God which had been formed by this time. In a grove meeting conducted by Schell and Dillon they had become convinced that these people were teaching the truth. Riggle still made no profession of a conversion experience, but he did start attending church regularly. Of particular interest to him was a Sunday school class taught by Minnie Shellhammer, daughter of the original "come-outer" in the community. Both the things which were taught and also the teacher made a deep impression on the young man.

Before there was time for further developments, either spiritually or romantically, the Riggle family moved from Pennsylvania to the state of Washington.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

This was in the fall of 1891. The following summer tragedy struck the little family when Riggle's father was killed instantly in a logging accident. This was a very sobering experience for Herbert. He saw as he never had before the risk involved in postponing the matter of getting right with God, but he still did nothing about it. A few weeks later he and his mother returned to Pennsylvania.

In January of 1893 G. T. Clayton and F. N. Jacobson came to their church to conduct a revival. One night during these meetings Riggle went forward and sought the experience which he had known for some time that he needed. He left the altar and testified that he was determined to sin no more and that he intended to serve God for the rest of his life. But he was not satisfied. Even though he had taken a very definite step he had not obtained the certainty and assurance he desired. He had made a start, though, and he did not intend to turn back.

Shortly after this he and Minnie Shellhammer were married, and he took his young bride back to the West. They made their home in New Whatcom (now Bellingham), Washington, near the Puget Sound. He went to work in a logging camp.

During the weeks since his attempt to find spiritual certainty he had been spending considerable time in searching his own soul and praying that he might find the perfect peace to which his wife and others testified. Minnie gave him considerable help since she had been converted since the age of eleven. The climax came one night while he was away from home in the logging camp. The talk of the lumberjacks seemed particularly coarse that night. One rough fellow, on being warned that God might not be pleased with the way he was talking, challenged the Almighty

in such vehement terms that Riggle fully expected God to strike the place and destroy all of them. He hastily left the crowd and went to his bunk where he fell on his knees and began to pray earnestly. His own description is a graphic account of what happened:

In that dark hour I cried: "Where shall I go? What shall I do?" It seemed as though my life was suspended by a brittle thread, and I was swinging over the vortex of hell. . . . I cried, "I am lost. I am lost." A gentle voice rang out, "I came to seek and save that which was lost." At that instant hope sprang up in my bosom, and I began to see the goodness of God to me. . . . I wept like a child. Then and there I bade farewell to sin forever. . . . It was only a few moments till faith sprang up in my heart and I said, "Jesus saves me. I am his, and he is mine." Oh, the joy that filled my soul!

Riggle had heard many sermons on the subject of sanctification, so soon after his conversion he began to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Riggle's understanding of what was involved in this "second work of grace" shows remarkable insight both into the nature of man and also the ways of God. He was not seeking just a "second blessing" or a "baptism of power." Neither was it merely a matter of "dying out to sin" or "laying all on the altar." For him the accomplished work would include all of these and perhaps more. He was aware that there were both positive and negative elements involved.

Another important insight was his awareness that sanctification is a personal experience which cannot be stereotyped. He saw it as being as variant as individuals themselves. "No two persons could be found," he noted, "who relate exactly the same detailed experience in their coming to a knowledge of the indwelling Comforter." As he conceived it, the only

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

two requirements for obtaining the experience, however it might be defined, were consecration and faith.

With this sort of understanding his quest was not a frantic one, but was rather a quiet looking to God for whatever more might be in store for him through the Holy Spirit. As he himself describes it:

I did not seek for manifestations, for certain experiences, or fruits of the Spirit, but I sought for the *Spirit himself*. I received him. . . . I was sensitively conscious of his sweet indwelling presence.

By the time Riggle had come this far in his spiritual quest he was also aware that God was calling him into the ministry. He many times said that this call was just as definite as his conversion. He did not struggle against it but simply accepted the challenge without knowing how or when he would get started or anything that would be in store for him. He stayed with his job and waited for developments.

### *First Sermon*

His first opportunity to preach came a few weeks later in May of 1893. He went with his wife one Sunday morning to a Free Methodist church in the city where they were living. After the sermon a "class meeting" was held, and the meeting was thrown open for personal testimonies. Both of them made the most of the opportunity, witnessing, among other things, that God had called them out of "sect-Babylon." There was considerable discussion after the meeting and Riggle was invited to preach in the evening service and tell them more about this new concept of the church. Over the protests of his wife, who knew that he had never preached before, he consented to do so. On the way home he suddenly became aware

of the awful implications of getting a sermon on such a deep subject as the church in the next few hours. Needless to say, he spent the afternoon in prayer, preparation, and fearful anticipation. By the time the evening service was scheduled he had a nine-point sermon on the assigned topic.

When he arrived at the meetinghouse his fears were not particularly allayed when he found that the building was filled to capacity. Some of the people had spread the word around that a preacher from Pennsylvania would deliver the sermon that night. When the time came for him to speak he did not get all the way to the pulpit but stopped at a stand in front of it. Falteringly he read his text and began his sermon. He wondered if he would be able to continue. Much to his surprise within a minute or so his fear left him and his tongue was loosed. For more than an hour he spoke to the people. Some of them, including Mrs. Riggle, got happy enough to do a bit of "shouting." He later wrote, "Praise God for the experience of that hour. I never after doubted my call to the ministry."

Within two months Riggle and his wife were back in Pennsylvania. He announced his call to the ministry, and an appointment was made for him to preach in his home community. One of his relatives remarked, "What a pity! Had he remained with the Lutherans he might have amounted to something." Again he was very fearful and spent a great deal of time in prayer before the meeting. He was very conscious that the large crowd of his former friends and people who had known him since childhood were there to size him up as a preacher. As he faced the audience and began to speak, however, he became utterly oblivious to both the people and himself. He became lost in

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

the message which he had to deliver, and apparently the Lord helped him to do it. His utterances were later described as being far above the ability which he then possessed. This was a very humbling experience for him, for it made him aware that God wanted to use him perhaps in some extraordinary way. He later considered this and some subsequent incidents to be evidence that he had been given at least one phase of the gift of prophecy. He never after that regarded his ministry lightly, for he looked upon preaching as God's way of speaking to the people.

The next month Riggle attended his first Church of God camp meeting. It was a local gathering near Perryville, Pennsylvania, but it was a new and great experience for him. D. S. Warner and his evangelistic company were there for the whole meeting, with Warner doing most of the preaching. It was here that Riggle first really caught the spirit of the movement with which he had already identified himself. As he listened to the preaching, which was mostly doctrinal, and as he joined in the singing, which was also mostly doctrinal, he became a fellow participant in the exuberance which was so characteristic of this group of people. He describes the meeting in these telling words:

Under such preaching, it was not difficult to find the highway that leads to Zion. And the ransomed of the Lord came home with everlasting joy. The altars were well filled with seekers for salvation and entire sanctification. . . . They came through, making "a joyful noise unto the Lord." The whole camp seemed aflame with glory. Every saint of God was inspired with the great message of the reformation, and all had confidence in the work. There was a sweet spirit of love and unity. It was truly wonderful. . . . This meeting was a great inspiration to me to go forth with zeal and earnestness and herald far and wide the "present truth."

It was in October of that same year, 1893, that Riggle launched out into full-time gospel work. Ordinarily a young man just starting out would have accompanied an older minister in several meetings before undertaking any campaigns alone. But he did not choose to do it this way. He heard that a United Brethren church at North Point, Pennsylvania, thirty-eight miles from his home, would open its building for a meeting. He decided to investigate. A friend offered to provide transportation, so he loaded his wife and their infant daughter, Ola, into the buckboard which had been provided, and they were on their way to the first evangelistic campaign of their career.

They found the church and started the meeting. It soon became apparent that the glowing success of his first two preaching experiences was not to be repeated every time he stepped into the pulpit. He began to have reason to wish that some older minister were with him. He found that he had to spend most of the time between services digging out sermons. Looking back on the experience later he could say that he thanked God for this opportunity to learn the value of depending on help from above, but while he was in the midst of it, this long-range benefit was hard to see.

In addition to the inward difficulties there were also outward complications. At the end of the first week Ola contracted pneumonia. The people with whom they were staying were not Christians, and they had their own views about how a sick baby ought to be treated. Furthermore, in return for their hospitality they expected their guests to conform to their regulations in regard to heat in the room and having a light at night. The situation became so unbearable that after a few days Mrs. Riggle had to take the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

child back to the home of her mother. She later returned without the baby to continue her responsibilities in the revival.

Another complicating factor was the threat of losing their meeting place. The United Brethren people were very kind in opening their church for the services, but their generosity almost reached the breaking point when, as a result of Riggle's preaching, seventeen of their members requested that their names be removed from the classbook. By a vote of the trustees, three to two, the Riggles were allowed to finish the campaign.

Despite these difficulties the meeting continued for seventeen nights with notable results. A congregation of around thirty was established shortly thereafter, and three of those who took their stand for the "truth" later became ministers.

From here the Riggles went to Georgeville where they started in a small hall but later were invited to move to the Baptist church. As this meeting got under way they were joined by some helpers. Ora Howard (later Mrs. D. O. Teasley) had been converted in the North Point revival and was eager to work for the Lord, so she came over to assist with the music. Another young woman, Belle Sheldon, came over from Blanco. These, together with Riggle and his wife, found that they worked well as a team, so they called themselves an evangelistic "company." They formed a quartet to furnish special music, and Riggle did most of the preaching.

The success of this Georgeville meeting has already been noted. By it the way was opened for them to go, not only to the Richmond skating rink, but also to many other places all across the country. As an evangelist Riggle had mushroomed into prominence



within a matter of weeks. By midwinter D. S. Warner had heard of his activities and had sent George T. Clayton to see what kind of work he was doing. Clayton was apparently impressed with the reports, but he went back with Riggle to the places where meetings had been held and helped the converts get established into working congregations. Clayton and Riggle later did considerable work together.

For the next ten years H. M. Riggle, "the boy preacher of the reformation," continued in this kind of activity. His usual pattern was to go into an area where the "truth" had not been preached or where there was no congregation of the Church of God, start a meeting in whatever facilities were available, and then assist the converts in establishing a new congregation of "saints." Sometimes he found a meeting place but sometimes he did not, so he would hold services in a grove or bring in a tent. Sometimes he had his company along, sometimes he went alone. On some occasions he teamed up with stalwarts like Clayton or A. J. Kilpatrick and at other times he took younger ministers along with him. A good summary of the type of work which was done in this period and the spirit in which it was carried on is given by Riggle himself.

We usually had a strong force of good singers and would sing along the country roads and as we passed through towns and villages. This attracted large crowds wherever we went. There was an enthusiasm that seemed to carry everything before it. Speaking for myself, I had implicit confidence in our message and the reformation movement as a whole. I never entertained a doubt but that our work was of God. This gave boldness and authority. With this confidence we threw all our strength into the work, and with heart and soul faced the combined powers of opposition.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

### *On the "Floating Bethel"*

From these early days until the end of his life Riggle had a great passion to get this message out to the people. Even at great personal sacrifice he would do anything he could to further the work. A good example of this characteristic is his participation in the *Floating Bethel* project.

George T. Clayton had conceived the idea of equipping this secondhand boat as a chapel and floating it down the Ohio River to the Mississippi and then on down to the Gulf of Mexico, evangelizing towns on both sides of the rivers as they went. He was in the process of finding the money to buy the boat and equip it. Riggle at this time had just received a small sum of money in settlement of the family estate. When he became aware of this project and was convinced that it was a wonderful means to reach many new people he gladly put a considerable portion of his inheritance into this river boat chapel. He and his wife joined the party of evangelists on this boat for a few weeks in the spring of 1894 but left after Mrs. Riggle concluded that it was no place to rear a family. This conclusion was reached after one of the children almost stepped off into the river.

After the Riggles left the *Bethel* it was used only a few months longer. Before it got out of the Ohio River it caught fire and was completely destroyed. Riggle never lamented putting his money into this venture even though it did not turn out to be a tremendous success. The only thing about it which stuck in his memory was that many congregations were raised up in the river towns. Among the places where the "truth" was planted was Moundsville, West

Virginia, where the Gospel Trumpet publishing work was later located for eight years.

During all his years in the ministry Riggle never ceased to be an evangelist. After the first decade he was usually associated with some specific church and functioned as its pastor. During his lifetime he officially held about eight pastorates, though he had the oversight of several other congregations for short periods of time. His pastoral charges, however, were usually just the "home base" for a much more extensive ministry. Since Mrs. Riggle was also a minister it often became her responsibility to pastor the church while her husband traveled in evangelistic campaigns. This was usually a convenient arrangement since it was impossible for her to travel much anyway with six children to care for. Since he traveled more extensively as the years went by, sometimes being gone for as much as ten months at one time, the major responsibility for rearing the family fell on her shoulders. Though it was often hard for all concerned, this seemed to be the best way of getting the most done.

Even when he was home Riggle was seldom satisfied to be preaching at only one place. He would go into the surrounding country and neighboring towns and hold meetings in schoolhouses, courtrooms, and private homes. He would then help the converts to form a new congregation. While pastoring at Akron, Indiana, for example, he either started or gave assistance to six other congregations in that area. At the time he was pastor of the Oakland, Pennsylvania, church he also was responsible for starting churches in Middle Run and New Bethlehem. In Oklahoma City he and Mrs. Riggle were pastors of two churches at the same time. In Chicago and in Bedford, Indiana,

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

they kept up the same busy pace. This kind of fervent urgency characterized his whole ministry. He was a true pioneer.

Riggle's preaching was for the most part doctrinal. His chief purpose in every sermon was to convince. Even a casual glance through his many-pointed outlines reveals that he was always pressing for a decision, either in accepting a truth or in acting on a truth already comprehended. He marshals his arguments in systematic fashion and concludes by driving home the desired point.

This method of preaching led him into another sort of activity. Public debating was quite popular in those days, and Riggle became the movement's champion forensic defender. It all started in the late 1890's when a Reverend Herchberger in Hawthorn, Pennsylvania, gave a public lecture on "Saintism" in which he fired a broadside at several of the doctrines upheld by the Church of God and challenged any one of the preachers who were present to dare to defend their beliefs. Such a challenge could hardly be honorably ignored. Riggle was one of those present. Apologetically and modestly he tells what happened: "In this case I felt clear to stand up and vindicate our cause, which I did, and our opponent was confounded before all the people."

Altogether Riggle engaged in seven of these public discussions. Some of them lasted only one or two evenings, but several were carried on for two weeks or longer with both daytime and evening sessions. Two of them were taken down in shorthand and published. Interest usually ran high and opportunity was given to reach a wider audience than might have been the case otherwise. Not everyone was convinced, however, that this was a profitable kind of activity.

E. E. Byrum, for instance, was definitely opposed to the idea of doctrinal debates. Since he refused to let the Gospel Trumpet Company publish these discussions, Riggle had to have them printed elsewhere.

Riggle himself came to question whether these debates had permanent value since rancor was often engendered between the participants, and the audience came chiefly to be entertained. He justified participation on the basis of the demand and expectation of the times. One of the most profound insights ever expressed by this man, however, was written as an evaluation of this controversial activity. He looks beyond his own time and sees a brighter day dawning:

This spirit of controversy is rapidly disappearing, and God-fearing men everywhere are rising above their petty differences and seeking a common ground where all can work together in evangelizing the world. This is the better spirit.

### *Beyond These Borders*

In 1920 Riggle took advantage of an opportunity to extend his witness beyond the borders of North America. In a meeting of the Foreign Missionary Board, of which he was a member, at the Anderson Camp Meeting that year the need for someone to go to Syria was made known. Nellie Laughlin, who was then serving in that country, was due for a furlough and someone had to be found to carry on the work. At this same time also F. G. Smith and E. A. Reardon had just returned from their world tour in behalf of missions, and they had written and spoken of the urgent need in the Near East. Not only must Nellie Laughlin's work be carried on, it must be expanded.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

While the meeting was still in progress Riggle had to make a trip back to Akron to preach a funeral. As he rode along on the train he fell to thinking of the need which had been so vividly portrayed. By the time the train pulled into Akron he was definitely convinced that God was calling him to respond to this appeal. He went home and announced to his wife that they were going to Syria. After taking care of the funeral he returned to Anderson and told the Board how he felt. In that same meeting his appointment as missionary to Syria was approved. Within a short time the Riggles were making preparations to sail. They left New York in December. Along the way, in England, on the continent of Europe, and in North Africa, they took time to meet other missionaries and to hold revival services. They arrived at Beirut in April, 1921.

The Riggles served as vigorously in Syria as they had at home. In addition to maintaining the activities at two central mission stations they conducted meetings in more than twenty other towns and cities, in some of which new congregations were established. After a little over two years, however, the Riggles were forced to return to America because of Mrs. Riggle's health. But they had accomplished much in a short time. After their departure one of the Syrian leaders wrote to the Missionary Board:

Through the efforts of Brother and Sister Riggle, with their devotion and zeal, a blazing fire was set burning in the hearts of the Syrians. It will never be extinguished as long as we live.

Because of his experience abroad and his continued interest in missions Riggle was later asked to serve as executive secretary of the Missionary Board. He

filled this important position during the crucial depression years of 1930 to 1934.

### *Books, Books, Books*

In the midst of all his evangelistic and missionary activity Riggle took time to write an amazing number of books. He actually had a greater number of books published than did E. E. Byrum, who has been characterized as the most prolific writer of the movement. From the standpoint of total volume of material Byrum would still rank first, but Riggle runs him a close second. During his ministry he produced a total of twenty-three books and pamphlets.

Riggle's writings, like his sermons, are mostly doctrinal. His method was to choose a specific doctrine, outline what he considered to be its proper interpretation, and then proceed to defend that interpretation with every argument possible, using proof texts as the chief means of support. He would answer common objections and show the fallacy in other interpretations.

His first book, which appeared before the turn of the century, was *Two Works of Grace*. In 1903 he completed a book on Old Testament typology in regard to the church which had been started by D. S. Warner. This was published under the title, *The Cleansing of the Sanctuary*. Others of his books dealt with such doctrines as baptism, the Sabbath, and the church. He seems to have had a preoccupation, however, with the subject of eschatology. No less than eight of his books deal with themes relating to the consummation of God's purpose at the end of time. From the appearance of *The Kingdom of God and the One Thousand Years Reign* in 1899 to *Jesus*

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

*Is Coming Again* in 1943 he kept a pretty steady stream of literature on this topic rolling from the presses. *Man, His Present and Future* (1904), *Christ's Kingdom and Reign* (1918), and *Beyond the Tomb* (1929) are some of his other titles related to this subject. He wrote one autobiographical book, *Pioneer Evangelism*, which appeared in 1924.

Most of these books were composed while he was holding meetings. The earlier volumes were written by hand. His second daughter, Zelda, learned shorthand, so he was able to dictate several of his later books. She traveled with him a great deal. Even in the midst of a big revival campaign he maintained a rather strict schedule of writing or dictating a certain number of hours each day.

These incidents and these facts do not tell the whole story of H. M. Riggle, however. Nor would it be told if incidents and facts were multiplied a hundredfold, as well they might be. To understand a man such as he, one must know something of his attitudes, of the guiding motives of his life, and of the goals toward which he was striving. A few candid glimpses into his real character can perhaps help us to know him as he actually was.

There is little doubt that in his personal life Riggle sincerely tried to be the kind of man he told others they ought to be. In the big and important things he succeeded admirably. As in the case of most mortals, though, he had his personality quirks and eccentricities. Being in the public eye as much as he was, these were naturally noticed—and either smiled at indulgently or criticized, sometimes severely. For instance, many a housewife who had the responsibility of preparing meals for Riggle while he was a house guest during an evangelistic campaign has memories of dif-



ficulty in trying to please his exacting dietary requirements. Such hostesses will perhaps find small comfort in the knowledge that this same man, while on the mission field, made a great impression on the people because he always ate without hesitation whatever was put before him, regardless of its previous history or present condition.

Throughout all of his life Riggle felt the need for a strong dependence on God for help in the work to which he had been called. He seemed never to feel completely sure of himself in the situations which he faced. He was sure of his message and he never faltered at that point. Those closest to him say, however, that he always wondered about his own ability to do what was expected of him. One of the contributing factors, no doubt, to this sense of inadequacy was his lack of formal education. He tried hard to make up for it by reading. His library reveals a breadth of interest and a range of concern not found among many who have gone through the disciplines of higher education. Despite his study he was keenly, though not always consciously, aware that he was just a Pennsylvania farm boy with very little background to prepare him for the great work in which he was engaged. He was a bit awed by his own success, and he wanted to be sure that it was real. He was the kind who wanted proof, so he often quoted figures—number of converts, sermons, years in the ministry—in order to prove to himself, not so much that he was a success, but that God was using him.

Even as Riggle had sought spiritual certainty as a youth he also desired security and a sense of significance in regard to his ministry. There is no denying that he found great satisfaction in official position, in titles, and in recognition of almost any kind. There

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

is no denying either that he sometimes put himself in prominent places. He was simply trying to say that he felt God had called him to do important things. The titles were only evidence that the way was being opened for him to shoulder significant responsibilities in the Kingdom.

The final test of a man's worth, though, must come, not at the point of picking out certain superficial personality traits and judging him on that basis, but at the point of his own motives and desires and the results he was able to produce. Riggle wanted desperately for God to use him, and God did in a most unusual way. Probably not another person in the Church of God movement has spoken personally to more people, has started as many new congregations, or has led as many other ministers into the work as did H. M. Riggle. He had a winsome way of presenting the message which challenged people to walk in the way of truth as far as their knowledge would allow. He patiently led them into paths of greater knowledge and service.

Riggle did not want to sit on the sidelines in the ongoing work of the church; he had abundant energy, and he was willing to expend it for the sake of the cause. He filled many responsible positions, and he worked hard at every one of them. As a charter member and president for many years of the Gospel Trumpet Company, as a member of various boards and agencies, and as a leader in many national and local programs of the church he gave conscientious and distinguished service.

In a broad overview of this man and his work there are two characteristics which seem to stand out above all others. The first is his stability. Riggle was a pioneer, but he was not an innovator. He seldom

was the instigator of new developments. Once a policy had been formulated by the brethren, however, he became a strong promoter and defender of it. His apparent policy was to listen to both the Lord and his fellow ministers. When once he had the mind of both he spoke forth boldly and uncompromisingly. This is not to say that he was always a follower of prevailing opinion. On a few occasions when issues were clear-cut in his own mind he differed with even his closest friends and stood firm. In the main, however, he stood shoulder to shoulder with his brethren in the fight against evil and forces from without.

This tendency to be a strong upholder of accepted standards in both doctrine and practice made him an important figure in the maintenance of stability in the work during times of stress and difficulty. He had no inclination to be a revolutionary; neither was he easily led astray. Of all the possible defections in which he might have become implicated during his long ministry he was not unwholesomely involved in a single one of them. He was always loyal—even when he had cause to be critical. And unlike some of his contemporaries he furthered the cause of peace by being kindly disposed toward those who had fallen into error or had lost their bearings in some way. He was much more likely to be found in a reconciliation meeting than in a disfellowshipping trial.

The second of his outstanding characteristics was his passion for the message—the message of a brighter day. This was his driving force. It kept him going for sixty years. His desperate desire to let the people know produced one of the most dramatic ministries of our time.

## Chapter Five

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### *Frederick G. Smith*

IN THE SUMMER OF 1906 a studious-looking young preacher of twenty-five put the finishing touches on a 450-page manuscript and turned it over to a publisher. His manuscript, which he characterized as a "condensed" treatment of a subject "of interest to every Bible student" and whose "importance cannot be over-estimated," represented many months of diligent study and the careful examination of many sources. It had really been quite an undertaking for so young a man who had completed only a common school education and who had no training whatever in the techniques of scholarly research and writing.

For this particular young man, however, the arduous task had not been considered a tedious one. In the first place, he had a special interest in the topic on which he was writing. More than that, he definitely felt that God had laid on his shoulders the responsibility for setting down some very important insights into the meaning of an often misunderstood part of the Bible. Besides, he knew that this particular publishing house was eager to add to its rather meager list of publications a book on the theme he had chosen. As a consequence of all these factors he

spent long hours in the painstaking job of pushing this project to completion as soon as possible.

The book did not appear, however, until early in the year 1908. The Gospel Trumpet Publishing Company, to whom he had given the manuscript, was in the process of moving from Moundsville, West Virginia, to Anderson, Indiana, so there was considerable delay. When the book was eventually published it bore the title, *The Revelation Explained, An Exposition, Text by Text, of the Apocalypse of St. John*. Its author was listed as F. G. Smith.

Smith was already quite well known by those associated with the Gospel Trumpet Company. A few years before he had spent some time as a worker in the Trumpet office, serving as personal secretary to the editor in chief. For ten years prior to the time his book was published he had been a minister and had traveled rather extensively as an itinerant evangelist; hence he was not exactly a newcomer to the church. It was not until after the appearance of this first book, however, that he came to be recognized as a leader of national stature in the Church of God. This marked the beginning of a long career of service and leadership. From then until the time of his death almost forty years later he never ceased to hold a place of particular prestige in the movement with which he was identified.

This book which proved to be a crucial turning point in Smith's career was, as the title indicates, nothing less than an exposition of the last book of the New Testament. It may not have been extraordinary as a scholarly treatise, but it almost immediately made Smith the foremost authority in the Church of God in the fields of church history and biblical interpretation. A brief look at this writing and its relation

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

to the Church of God reformation movement will indicate the reason why both the book and its author became so important.

As most of the previous leaders in the movement had done before him, Smith viewed the Apocalypse as containing prophetic symbols which, when properly interpreted, reveal the history of Christianity down to the present day. There was nothing particularly new about this method of interpreting the Revelation, for many others in preceding centuries had approached the book within this same framework. Smith, in fact, frankly admits his debt to several other writers. The distinguishing feature which made his work so significant was not, then, in the originality of the method but in the uniqueness of the particular scheme of church history which Smith found to be symbolized in the Apocalypse.

Earlier leaders in the Church of God, particularly Warner and Riggle, had already propounded the idea that the year 1880 was a prophetic date, the time when a new era in the history of the Christian church was to begin. They had also drawn the conclusion that since the movement of which they were a part had its beginning around 1880 it was only logical to assume that the new era and the new movement were to be identified with each other. Although this idea had been preached since around 1890 and had been partially developed in a 1903 publication, there had never been any full-scale development of this prophetic scheme. This is what Smith proposed to do. He apparently succeeded, for the book was immediately accepted by all the leaders of the movement as the answer to a long-felt need. He presented strong evidence that the Church of God was not just another group sprung into being; it was an essential aspect

of God's total scheme for the church and for history itself.

The subsequent success of this book and the prestige which it brought the writer were not due altogether, however, to the pertinence of the topic discussed. Of almost equal importance was the masterful way in which the subject was handled. Smith correlated the text and the events to which they pointed with dexterity. With amazing facility he marshaled a tremendous array of facts into a meaningful scheme. Everything seemed to fall into place. For those who accepted the church-historical method of interpreting the Book of Revelation, Smith gave convincing proof that the Church of God was God's agent for a prophetic mission. For those already convinced he gave thrilling authentication for what they had been preaching for some time. The name of F. G. Smith became increasingly important as the years went by, for he himself became a symbol of the truth which he had so admirably expounded.

### *"Stepping into the Light"*

This Frederick George Smith was born November 12, 1880, on a farm near Lacota, Michigan. His parents, Joseph F. and Mary A. Smith, had been for years sincere and satisfied members of the Methodist Church. In January of 1883, however, two traveling evangelists came to their community and upset their state of spiritual satisfaction. Samuel L. Speck and Sebastian Michels preached that it was necessary for everyone to have a personal experience of regeneration and a second experience of entire sanctification and to withdraw from the sinful divisions which had destroyed the unity of Christ's church.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

Being Methodists the Smiths could easily go along with the first two of these points, but the third was somewhat disturbing. Before the meeting was over, though, they had accepted the challenge. Both of them "stepped out" into the "light" and took their stand for the "truth." From this time to the end of their lives they were enthusiastic supporters of the Church of God reformation movement.

Joseph and Mary Smith did not themselves become ministers in the strict sense of that term, but their farm home became one of the most active evangelistic centers in that part of the country. It was here that many revival services and prayer meetings were held. After the Gospel Trumpet office moved to Grand Junction, only a short distance away, the Smith home became a meeting place for the workers, and many were the occasions when songs of worship and praise could be heard coming from this two-story farmhouse. Whenever any traveling ministers came through southern Michigan it was usually in the Smith house that they were given lodging and food. There was seldom a day from the time of their conversion until the Trumpet office moved to Moundsville in 1898 that some activity connected with the movement was not in progress in their home.

It was in such an atmosphere as this that young Fred Smith spent the early years of his life. He never knew anything except all this church-related hustle during the time that he remained at home. It has been said that he was rocked in his cradle by A. B. Palmer, that he played as a boy with N. H. Byrum, and that he attentively listened by the hour to the long sermons and very adult conversations which took place when such men as Speck, Michels, Palmer, D. S.



Warner, J. N. Howard, A. J. Kilpatrick, and many others visited in the Smith home.

Even as a boy Fred amazed his elders by the ease with which he could enter into discussions on doctrinal topics and by his extraordinary ability to memorize Scripture passages. He was not content just to know certain familiar Bible stories; he would select some of the heavier passages and commit them to memory.

Fred had many recollections of these boyhood days, but one incident stood out as a never-to-be-forgotten event. It took place almost before he was old enough to be aware of his surroundings in a way that could be remembered. His parents took him to the 1883 camp meeting at Bangor, Michigan, the first such meeting which the Smiths attended. One day a woman by the name of Emma Miller (later Mrs. A. B. Palmer), who had been blind and an invalid for nearly three years, was instantly and completely healed in answer to prayer. The rejoicing of the saints was of such magnitude that young Fred was frightened to the point that it was almost impossible for his older sisters to allay his fears and get him to stop crying. As this story was retold time and again in subsequent years it made a lasting and growing impression on his mind. He never had to be convinced that God was at work among his people.

In the fall of 1890 when Fred was "nine, going on ten" he went one Sunday with his parents to a "protracted meeting" being held about six miles from his home. The evangelist was D. S. Warner. In the morning service he spoke of the children's meetings which had been conducted during the week and announced that another such meeting would be held that afternoon at one o'clock. The Smiths had planned to stay

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

all day, so Fred decided to attend. He sat on the front row.

There was nothing particularly unusual about the meeting, but at its conclusion Warner asked if there were any of the children who wanted to give their lives to God. After a few had responded by coming forward he looked around over the group who still remained standing and spotted the young lad he had talked with many times when he had been in the Smith home. He saw that the youngster had a troubled look on his face, so he spoke directly to him and asked point blank, "Fred, would you like to get saved also?" Fred looked up and blinked his eyes and swallowed hard. He managed to get out a feeble, "Yes," and went forward and bowed at the altar. Soon Warner was at his side, praying. His prayer was a simple one. "O Lord," he said, "take the stony heart out of this boy and give him a new heart and a new spirit." Just as he said that something happened to Fred. He later said, "I thought my heart had actually gone out of me! Praise God! I wonder even yet how so much joy and glory could be poured into one little soul."

After Fred's conversion he continued in the local common school until he had finished all the work they offered. He would have liked to go on to high school, but such opportunities were very limited in those days. He did the next best thing under the circumstances. He knew that if he stayed home on the farm the ever-present work would keep him from doing any studying on his own, so he asked for the privilege of going back to the school which he had just finished just so he could have a place to study. He would receive no help from the teacher, of course, but would be free to study as he chose. Permission was granted for this rather unusual arrangement, and Fred began work of his own

choosing. The first subject which he chose was shorthand.

After becoming quite proficient in this skill, Fred went on to other studies. Without formal instruction he also learned something about music and later became quite adept at playing the piano. In the next few years he also acquired skills in repairing watches and sewing machines. His primary ambition, however, was to become a stenographer, so he spent a great deal of time practicing his shorthand.

### *Into the Trumpet Office*

As a result of this self-training Fred Smith attained a proficiency which enabled him to do the work required of an office secretary in that day. He could take shorthand with sufficient speed and accuracy to keep up with almost any normal speaker. With these qualifications he went to work in the office of the Gospel Trumpet Company in 1897, some months before he was seventeen years old.

Fred felt very keenly his need for further education, however, so he made plans to leave the office and attend one of the colleges in Michigan. N. H. Byrum, who was handling much of the office routine at that time, talked to him about how much he was needed in the Trumpet office and finally persuaded him to remain there instead of going to school. He soon became the private secretary of E. E. Byrum, the editor in chief. When the Trumpet moved from Grand Junction to Moundsville, West Virginia, in 1898, young Smith also made the move. He continued in the same responsibility there for two more years. This decision to stay in the office ruled out any further formal schooling, but Fred continued to read and do a great

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

amount of studying on his own. In fact, he never ceased being a student during his whole life.

It was while working in the Gospel Trumpet office that Smith felt his call to the ministry. He began preaching in 1898 and was ordained in 1900 when he left his secretarial responsibilities to go into full-time evangelistic work. He did not cease to use his shorthand, however, for he often found it helpful in assisting other ministers. He took down the Riggle-Ebeling discussion, for instance, which was later published from his transcript. He also served as a secretary to W. G. Schell for a time and probably took down the material for *Is the Negro a Beast?* as Schell dictated it to him.

For the first two years he traveled for the most part with older ministers, as was the custom of that time. He had plenty of opportunity to preach and had the usual number of interesting experiences. His name appears as co-evangelist in several meetings in the mid-west states during this period. The winter of 1901-2 he spent evangelizing with Elmer Greeley in Wisconsin.

In the spring of 1902, however, the pattern of his ministry changed. Two years before this a young lady from Buffalo, West Virginia, came to the Trumpet office to offer her services. She had been converted a short time before in a meeting held in a Methodist church near her home by George Boyer and William Drew. The evangelists had met with a great deal of opposition as the meeting progressed and were denied the use of the meetinghouse. By the time they left, however, a few had been convinced of the truth of the message which they had preached. Among these was eighteen-year-old Birdie Mitchell. Her family, unfortunately, failed to accept the teaching and became very antagonistic to the stand which she had

taken. Because of this unpleasant situation she decided to leave home and go to the Trumpet Workers' Home in Moundsville. She proved herself a very zealous and capable worker for the cause of Christ. As Fred Smith stopped in at the Trumpet office he could not help noticing such a person. They were married on March 30, 1902.

After their marriage the Smiths spent ten busy years in evangelistic work, traveling mostly as a team. They first went back to Smith's home state of Michigan. In company with Merton Merica part of the time they spent a winter traveling from schoolhouse to schoolhouse in the northern part of the state. The snow was often so deep they could not get to the place where meetings were being held. From there they went also into the rural areas of northern Indiana where they held many successful revivals. The most notable of these, perhaps, were the meetings at Praise Chapel and Brush College. It was during this period of intense activity without a permanent home, much less an office in which to work, that the research and writing were done for *The Revelation Explained*.

The income from this kind of pioneer work was very scant and often the Smiths would have been in difficult straits had they not received some financial help from Fred's parents who continued to maintain the farm in Michigan. Sometimes Fred would take some time off from his preaching to work awhile. This happened in the summer of 1906 after the book manuscript was turned in. He spent some time helping his father in the peach harvest for which he received one hundred dollars. He decided to spend it on an evangelistic tour of the far West. He and his wife left immediately and arrived in eastern Washington in time for the Colfax camp meeting. They then held meetings

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

in other Washington cities such as Fairfield, Centralia, Edmonds, and Seattle. From there they moved south and spent the winter in revivals in Oregon and California. They did not get back home until just before the Grand Junction camp meeting in June of 1907.

The return to the Middle West in no way lessened the pace of the Smiths' activity. The next several years were spent in going from place to place, holding evangelistic meetings and sometimes giving special lectures on the Book of Revelation. Mrs. Smith played a very significant role in these meetings and did a considerable amount of preaching. The popularity of this evangelistic team is indicated by the fact that after five years of working in the same general territory they still had sufficient calls to be booked up over a year ahead.

It was in the summer of 1912, though, that something happened to alter the course of the Smiths' busy career. The turning point was not a spectacular event; it was just a simple conversation with a fellow minister, George P. Tasker. Tasker had long been interested in missionary work and was then making definite plans to go to India. His wife and Bessie L. Hittle had preceded him by several months, since they had an opportunity to teach a term in a native school in Syria. Tasker was to go through the Mediterranean and pick them up en route. After arriving in Syria these two ladies began to write back telling of the tremendous need for someone to come to that country to preach the gospel and carry the message of truth. The opportunity was wide open.

This appeal from the Near East struck a very responsive note in the spiritual consciousness of both Smith and his wife. His own interest in missions dated back several years to the days around Grand Junction when he had heard various ministers tell of foreign

lands and the needs which existed there. He could remember when back in 1897 Gorham Tufts had come to the Trumpet office and a public meeting had been arranged for him to tell of his trip to India. F. G. had taken that speech down in shorthand; hence he could remember vividly how his soul had been stirred as he even then contemplated carrying the gospel to non-Christian lands. He could also recall conversations with A. D. Khan who was a native of India, and E. E. Byrum's many stories of needs around the world had quickened his interest all over again. God had already spoken to him about responding to these calls from abroad, and it had been a topic of conversation in their family circle on more than one occasion. As this specific need was presented, then, it seemed to both Fred and Birdie that the finger of divine responsibility was pointing directly at them.

Even so, the decision was not easily made. They thought of all the reasons why they should stay at home. They reminded themselves of the meetings which they had booked ahead and of their responsibility to these places. They contemplated the pain of leaving relatives and friends.

With these thoughts upon our minds, on the second day of July, 1912, my wife and I retired to our room for the purpose of prayer, that we might get the matter settled. Brother Tasker had already arranged to sail from New York on July 18, en route to India via Syria, and as we desired to accompany him if we went East, it was necessary that we decide at once. While kneeling in prayer in that little upper room, my sister was playing a phonograph in the room below, and I could hear distinctly the beautiful voices of the Edison Mixed Quartette singing, "Home, home, sweet, sweet home; Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." But the will of God was dearer to us than the pleasant thoughts of "home, sweet home." . . . Our decision was made. We informed Brother Tasker that

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

if he would delay his sailing until July 25 we would be ready to go with him.

Tasker arranged for the delay in sailing, so they hurriedly made the necessary arrangements and arrived in New York with their young son Gerald on the appointed day. En route to Syria they stopped for evangelistic meetings in Ireland, England, and Egypt. They arrived in Beirut on September 4, 1912.

Although the actual term of service as missionaries was relatively brief, being less than two years, the accomplishments of the Smiths were significant. It was through their efforts that a permanent work was established in that part of Syria which is now Lebanon. The work there continues to the present day even though no Church of God missionaries are in the country. The effect on Smith himself was also significant, for it broadened his vision and gave him perspective in regard to the total work of the church, which he had occasion to use many times thereafter.

The Smiths returned to America in the summer of 1914. For a time they resumed their previous pattern of work, traveling from place to place preaching the gospel and telling of their experience abroad. But things were shaping up for another change. By this time Smith's ability as a writer was coming to be recognized. After his first book back in 1906 he had not written any more for a few years. Then in 1911 *The Evolution of Christianity* was published. While in Syria he had conceived the idea for writing a comprehensive yet simple topical exposition of the Scriptures. By the time he left there the manuscript for *What the Bible Teaches* was completed. This book was to go through many editions and sell over 100,000 copies. Shortly after his return from the Near East he had submitted a rather lengthy manuscript entitled, *Mis-*



*sionary Journeys Through Bible Lands.* This was published in 1915.

### *To the Editor's Chair*

In view of all this literary productivity, several persons connected with the Gospel Trumpet Company felt that one with such promising ability could make a contribution in the editorial office. Accordingly he was called to Anderson to be an editorial assistant. When E. E. Byrum left the editorial chair several months later the most obvious choice for a successor was the thirty-five-year-old F. G. Smith. So on June 15, 1916, his name first appeared on the masthead of the *Gospel Trumpet* as editor in chief. This was an office which he was to hold for the next fourteen years.

Smith's election to the editorship only confirmed the general high esteem and respect which the church as a whole held for him. His books, particularly *The Revelation Explained* and *What the Bible Teaches*, had made him the foremost expounder of biblical truth in the movement. His loyalty to the church was unquestioned and his ability as a defender of the faith held in high regard. Without doubt he was the most logical person to step into this important post.

As editor Smith conscientiously tried to make the *Trumpet* the voice of the church. To keep from projecting himself too much into the content of the publication he did not regularly write editorials and only occasionally included one of his own articles. Even so, his own personality is reflected in more than a few ways. As one leafs through the pages for these years he is struck with the recurrence of material dealing with either one of two themes—missions and the church.

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

His own experience on the mission field had made him aware more than ever before of the necessity of carrying out the Great Commission. Because of this deep conviction he used the *Trumpet* to promote the missionary cause in every way he could. In addition to periodic "missionary numbers" which dealt altogether with missionary themes, almost every issue of the *Trumpet* carried several articles dealing with world needs. It is interesting to note that he did not confine his concern simply to those places where the Church of God had workers; he called attention to needs and opportunities wherever they might exist. In order to keep abreast of these needs he, in company with E. A. Reardon, in 1918-19 made a world missionary tour which was publicized widely and did a great deal to stimulate interest in witnessing to the gospel in foreign lands. Whenever the history of foreign missions in the Church of God is fully written, the name of F. G. Smith will loom large as one of the chief promoters of this world-wide evangelistic enterprise.

The other recurrent theme—the church—was emphasized in various ways. It might be noted in passing that aside from the printed page the editor added considerably to the lifting up of this theme in his personal activity. He was never without advance bookings for delivering a series of lectures on Daniel and Revelation which portrayed the church in prophecy. He had some large charts prepared which, when displayed in a medium-sized building, would usually cover the entire front and parts of the walls on each side. It took him eight nights to go through the entire series. He amazed audiences with his ability to go through this entire complicated series, involving a countless number of details, without reference to a manuscript or notes. He later wrote up these lectures

in much the same form as they were given. They were published in 1941.

In the columns of the *Trumpet* there were, of course, numerous articles on the church by various writers. The particular concern of the editor for several of these years, however, was the practical matter of church government. This was a period which saw some very rapid growth in the movement, and many new developments were introduced in order to meet the changing demands. A quick look at some of the "firsts" which came during these years will indicate the rapidity of development. In 1917 the Gospel Trumpet Company was first put under the direct control of the ministry of the church. It was in this same year that Anderson Bible Training School was founded through the efforts of J. T. Wilson, general manager of the Gospel Trumpet Company. It was during these years also that other general agencies of the church were either started or expanded. The Board of Church Extension and Home Missions came into being in 1920. The Missionary Board, which was started in 1909 with seven members, was increased to a fifteen-member board in 1921. In 1923 the Board of Christian Education came into existence. Undoubtedly this was a period of rapid consolidation, for new structures were also springing up on the local and state levels as well as the national.

As editor of the *Gospel Trumpet* Smith was in a position to express his views in regard to all that was happening, and he usually did in one way or another. He was not opposed to organization as such, but he saw some dangers inherent in what was going on. He did some serious thinking and quite a bit of reading on the whole matter of church government. By 1919 he had come up with some answers. Several editorials on the theme appeared in the *Trumpet*, and in the

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

Anderson Camp Meeting of that year the outstanding feature was a sermon by F. G. Smith on "Charismatic Church Government."

From the very beginning of the movement the policy of internal government had been defined as "Holy Spirit leadership." Charismatic government was an extension of that same principle and an assertion that the Holy Spirit endowed certain people with "gifts" and "set them in the body" in accordance with the nature of the gifts bestowed. It was thus not within the province of any man or group of men to "set" the position of others in the church by any means whatever. "The government of the true church," wrote Smith, "is not vested inherently in any self-perpetuating priestly corporation, but is administered directly by our Lord Jesus Christ." This was a strong warning against what he looked upon as creeping ecclesiasticism. In the years that followed he wrote and spoke often against this growing danger. He was usually careful, however, to make a distinction between organizing for *business* and organizing for *spiritual jurisdiction*.

Throughout all of Smith's editorship he continued to be the watchdog for signs of "man rule" in any phase of the church's structure. This put him in the position of resisting some of the growing democratic tendencies in the movement. More people seemed to be wanting more to say about what went on in the church. To him this was an abortion of the charismatic principle, and so he "held the line" in spite of strong opposition. However, when his term expired in 1930 he was not re-elected, and Charles E. Brown, a known defender of these democratic procedures, was chosen to succeed him as editor.

There is no denying that this turn of events was a

terrific blow to Smith. He was stunned and hurt. It seemed to him that the whole church had turned its back on the basic truth on which it was founded—the truth which he had tried so hard to defend. The temptation to become bitter and retaliate was undoubtedly strong, but his sense of loyalty to his brethren and the church was stronger. Instead of fighting back he cautiously but truly said, “It is with a feeling of intense relief that I lay down the burden of editorial responsibility.” He wished Brown well in his new venture.

*Pastor, Lecturer, Evangelist*

After having prayerfully resolved to remain loyal and keep the right attitude he then faced the problem of redefining his ministry and finding a new place in the church. In the letter column of the *Gospel Trumpet* for July 3 of that fateful year he put out a feeler.

As I am now free from all office responsibilities I desire to give my entire time to the work of the ministry. I shall engage in various kinds of service. . . . We desire the prayers of all the brethren, that the blessings of God may continue to rest upon our ministry.

From the tone of his letter he apparently expected to keep up a heavy schedule of travel among the churches with a primary emphasis on his lecture series. But that was not his destiny. Although he did not then know it, some of the most fruitful and rewarding years of his ministry were yet ahead of him in a field which he had not yet tried, the local pastorate. In the fall of 1930 he and Mrs. Smith accepted a call to become pastors of the McKinley Avenue Church in Akron, Ohio.

This particular church was what would normally be called one of the “better” congregations, for they had

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

a nice new building in which to worship. But they also had a huge debt, so large, in fact, that it appeared as though everything would be lost. So with this discouraged group of people the Smiths took over the job of raising money at a time when the national economy was still skidding towards the depths of the greatest depression in the history of the nation. By careful planning and hard work, but mostly by creating a spirit of confidence among the people, they helped this congregation accomplish what most of them thought could never be done. In the fifteen years that they were pastors of this church Smith's leadership came to be increasingly respected, both in the locality and all across the country, for while Mrs. Smith carried heavy responsibility in their pastorate he had opportunity to travel in evangelistic and lecture work. As the years went by the high quality of his life became wider and better known.

In 1946 Smith was again called upon to serve the church at large. At that time the movement was facing a crisis. Widespread agitation had arisen over an alleged "letting down the standard" among the headquarters leadership. Most of the general agencies were being accused of failure to follow the teachings of the pioneers. It was in the midst of this criticism that F. G. was "mustered" into service. He was elected president of the Gospel Trumpet Company and was given the title of "Director of Public Relations." In this capacity he traveled to various parts of the country seeking to remove suspicion and to restore confidence in the general work. In addition he gave valuable assistance in the "million campaign," a special drive to obtain additional funds for world missions. All the great interests of his life—evangelism, missions, truth, and the church—seemed to come to focus in this new re-

sponsibility. He put himself into it with as much zeal and energy as he had ever put into anything. While in the midst of this tremendous assignment he suffered a heart attack and died, April 24, 1947.

Not much more needs to be said about F. G. Smith; his life speaks well for itself. Few men have shown more real ability and more magnanimity of spirit than he, and few, having once lost face, have been able, as he did, to return to a place of even greater respect and influence than before. Looking back over his life one can see many qualities which perhaps contributed to his over-all success, but one characteristic stands out above all the others—he never ceased to grow.

Smith is probably one of the most dramatic examples in the history of the Church of God of a man who kept himself open to new insights. Since the days of Warner one of the cardinal principles of the movement has been the concept of expanding truth. There has been, theoretically at least, a dedication to *all* the truth which God has revealed or may reveal. This was generally accepted to mean that no one had the right to put a "lid" on the body of accepted truth. Also, almost from the time of Warner there have been strong tendencies, too, to define orthodoxy—to say, "This is *our* position and from it we will not bend." In all fairness, it needs to be noted that Smith himself was sometimes a militant party to this tendency to say that revelation had reached a saturation point. On several notable occasions no one was a stronger defender than he of the truth once for all delivered to the pioneers. He resisted many changes from older interpretations, particularly those which he had himself set forth. He certainly would not be considered a "liberal."

In view of these tendencies it is all the more significant that he made some very notable changes in his

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

own viewpoints and took the lead in advancing certain new concepts as a more mature understanding of the real nature of things. Several incidental examples of his willingness to grow could be cited, such as his complete reversal of opinion in regard to wedding rings. He was probably the first leader in the movement openly to marry couples who used the ring and then to declare forthrightly, "I have decided that if I am going to marry couples who desire to have a ring ceremony I'd better quit preaching against wedding rings." So he did. A comparison of some of the sections in later revisions of his books with the same sections in earlier editions reveals several changes in viewpoint.

The most outstanding example of growth in the acceptance of truth, however, comes at the point on which he was usually most defensive, his interpretation of the Book of Revelation. After the appearance of his *The Revelation Explained* in 1908 it quickly became the "standard" for the church. It was more than an exegesis of a book of the Bible; it was a justification for the Church of God reformation movement. The book ran through twelve printings and became the handbook for practically every preacher in the church and was a "must" for every young man entering the ministry. It was generally considered to be *the* interpretation of Revelation, and none other was to be considered.

By the late 1930's, however, a few persons began to raise some questions as to whether this volume contained all the truth about the Apocalypse. Smith's answer, which might have been a stand-pat defense of all that was written thirty years before, was a major revision of *The Revelation Explained*. In answer to the many who asked, "Why the revision?" Smith



authorized the advertisers to say, "Thirty-seven years of experience in dealing with the subject enables the author to improve the original. It is the difference between the boy of twenty-five and the man of sixty-two." He himself described the revision as a "restatement of the same old-time truths" along with "additional light on these prophecies." He further stated that he had no objection to this book being described as *an* interpretation of the Apocalypse rather than proclaiming it as the only true interpretation. In view of some of the dogmatic attitudes expressed previously, this admission of the possibility of truth in other interpretations represents a bigness of soul and an openness of mind that are not easy to match.

In the total history of the Church of God F. G. Smith will always hold a unique place. He will be remembered not only for his many specific contributions in literature and leadership but also for being one of the first "native sons" of the movement. At a time when practically all the other leaders and most of the constituency were "come-outers," having previously been associated with some other group before "seeing the light," Smith never knew any other affiliation. He often said that he was a bridge between the first generation and those who were to follow. In a sense, at least, he accomplished this important purpose. His life is a dramatic example of the fact that it is possible for one who grows up in the church to be just as enthusiastic, just as convinced and thrilled with the message of "truth," and just as loyal as any who were on the outside and suddenly "saw the light," causing them to make a drastic change and take a definite stand. To him the "light" was just as bright and the "truth" was just as dear as it ever was to any who came out of "Babylon." In spite of personal affronts he would not allow his

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

loyalty to be diverted. He was never discouraged with the church. To his dying hour he continued to be a herald of a new day for the church which to him had grown brighter as the years went by. In an unpublished lyric he expressed the unlimited horizon of his hope:

*O glorious Mount Zion! no tongue can tell thy worth—  
"The beauty of the nations," the "joy of all the earth."  
I'm on thy sacred summit, thy glory now is mine;  
And out of thee, fair Zion, the Lord our God doth shine.*

## Chapter Six

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### *Nora S. Hunter*

ON A WARM DAY IN EARLY JUNE of 1932 a gray-haired fifty-eight-year-old lady stood before an official-looking group of fifteen people assembled in a small room in Anderson, Indiana. She was there by mutual invitation; that is, she had asked for the privilege of coming before this group, and they in turn had asked her to tell them her story. It was already known that the matter about which she was to speak was of great concern to both herself and the group. At the appointed time Chairman Albert F. Gray introduced to the Missionary Board of the Church of God this lady who was their guest—Nora S. Hunter, of Los Angeles, California.

Mrs. Hunter tremblingly arose and stood quietly for a few seconds before she said a word. She later said this was the most solemn moment of her life. As she began to speak she told them of a deep concern which had been burning in her heart for almost two years. It was difficult, though, to put all of her feelings, all of her dreams, and all of the plans she had made into words. In the telling, her story seemed simple and commonplace, yet at the same time it was complicated and almost fantastic. Her speech before the Board was

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

rather brief and boiled down to a reference to a recent trip she had taken to Europe and the eastern Mediterranean area, a picture on a magazine cover, a verse from the Psalms, and a conversation with two other women a year before at a lunch table on the Anderson campgrounds. It did not take long to recount these incidents and tell the Board what she had in mind. Then she sat down.

Those who listened were impressed. It began to dawn on them that these simple incidents might be the raw material for a really great idea. Perhaps it was the answer to some of the acute problems they were facing. But it was all too remote to get excited about. A few questions were asked and brief answers given. After discussion had ceased the Missionary Board, without fanfare, expressed approval of the plan which had been presented. Each member shook hands with Mrs. Hunter and wished her success. As she left the room she gave them this word of assurance: "At thy word I will let down the net." That was the end of the episode.

Yes, that is all there was to it—all except that a few days later during the Anderson Camp Meeting about two hundred people gathered in the Park Place Church and rather excitedly considered the fine points of a set of previously prepared bylaws and then set a time for another meeting the following day. At this next meeting in the old auditorium on the campground an even larger group, mostly women, listened to the same set of bylaws and voted to adopt them. In the course of the next day or so they completed the business of electing officers and designating some necessary committees. By the end of the camp meeting there had been brought into being the essential machinery for mobilizing the women of the Church of God. They gave their organization the imposing title of the National

Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society. Its first president was the lady in whose mind the idea was born, Nora S. Hunter. She was to hold this office for the next sixteen years.

### *Women in the Church*

Although this was the first time a women's organization had been formed in the Church of God it was by no means the first time that women had taken an active part in the work of the church. There was never a time in the history of the movement, in fact, when women were not considered an essential part of the leadership. It was a striking aspect of the early days to see women functioning on the same level as men. Forty years before the time of woman's suffrage on a national level a great company of women were preaching, singing, writing, and helping to determine the policies in this religious reform movement. The writers of articles appearing in the early issues of the *Gospel Trumpet* were often women and in the reports of evangelistic campaigns the activities of the fairer sex loomed large. Almost as well known as D. S. Warner, J. C. Fisher, S. L. Speck, and other men were such women as Mary Cole, Sarah Smith, and Lena Shoffner. These latter three are mentioned by Henry C. Wickersham in his *History of the Church*, published in 1900, as being among "the most earnest workers" of the early period.

The significant role played by women is indicated in the 1902 publication, *Familiar Names and Faces*. This book contains a brief account of the beginning of the work and the development of the Gospel Trumpet Company and has pictures of most of the people who were considered leaders in the movement. Of the more

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

than two hundred individuals whose photographs appear in this book about one-fourth are women. On the basis of this and other evidence it is probably safe to say that no other movement, either religious or secular, in this period of American history, except the suffrage movement itself, had such a high percentage of women leaders whose contribution was so outstanding.

One of the leading evangelists of this pioneer period was the same lady who stood so tremblingly before the Missionary Board in 1932. In the early days she was known as Nora Siens. She became involved in the "flying ministry" of this religious reform movement by way of a very complicated and, in a sense, tragic set of circumstances.

She was born August 16, 1873, in a one-room "box" house near Chanute, Kansas. The first eight years of her life were comparatively uneventful, except that the home was saddened by the death of an infant sister during this period. Her parents, Robert C. and Anna Meeker Siens, were not well-to-do people, and her father often had to work away from home to supplement the meager farm income. The Siens were devout and religious people, though, and were very diligent in teaching their children to pray and read the Bible. The whole family went to church whenever there was opportunity.

In the year that Nora was nine, however, multiple tragedy struck the Siens household. The first blow was the death of the mother. This left Robert Siens with four children to care for, one of them a six-weeks-old girl named Neenah. Within a very short time, though, there were only three, for Neenah became ill and died quite suddenly. Hardly had the shock of these losses been fully realized when four-year-old George was fatally injured in a fall from a wagon

tongue. This left only Nora and her brother Ed Byron, who was two years younger than she.

For a time the father tried to maintain a home for himself and the two children, but he had to spend so much time away from home at work that it soon became apparent that other arrangements would have to be made. Since he was a Union Army Civil War veteran he was able to find a home for Nora and Ed in a soldiers' orphanage, so they were sent to Normal City, Illinois, to begin a new kind of life. The father married again and did not think it advisable to bring the children into his new home, so they were left pretty much to themselves. During this period Nora suffered a great deal from loneliness but had no complaint about the treatment she received in the orphanage.

When Nora was fourteen some of her relatives in Kansas offered to let her come to live with them, and she took advantage of the opportunity. This brought her back into the familiar territory of south-eastern Kansas. The relatives lived near the town of Galesburg. Here she entered into the activities of the community. Among her activities was regular attendance at a Sunday school held in the Meeker Schoolhouse not far from where she lived. After a couple of years she was teaching a class of children. She apparently took this job only because helpers were so badly needed, for she felt most inadequate, both from the standpoint of knowing how to do it and of being spiritually prepared for the responsibility. She tried her best, though, to improve her method and to make herself more of a student of the Bible. Despite these efforts she did not succeed in shaking off the feeling that her own spiritual condition was not what it ought to be. Beset by doubts and uncer-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

tainties, she was generally dissatisfied with the state of her own soul. She longed for real inner peace, but it seemed always to be just beyond her grasp.

### *"My Heart Swells with Praise"*

In the spring of 1892 a new preacher began holding services in the Meeker Schoolhouse. He was Dr. S. G. Bryant, a former physician from Galesburg. His message struck a responsive note in Nora's soul. He described just the kind of spiritual experience which she longed to have. When he invited those who felt a need in their lives to come forward to pray about it Nora decided to go. There at a public altar she found the peace for which she had longed. She testified exultantly to her new experience: "My whole heart swells with praise and thanksgiving, because I realize and know that I have complete victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil."

This Dr. Bryant who had been able to help Nora find the answer to her need was to influence her in other ways. He had some religious connections which were a bit different from the usual run of denominations with which she was acquainted, and he had some ideas about church membership and Christian unity which sounded new and strange. He condemned the divisions in the Christian church as being sinful and told about a magazine called the *Gospel Trumpet* which advocated the abandonment of all sectarian groups so that Christians everywhere could be united in one church.

As Dr. Bryant preached these doctrines he told of his own spiritual quest. He had been a successful practicing physician and owner of a drugstore in the city of Galesburg when a traveling preacher by



the name of George R. Achor brought a tent into town and began holding services. Very few people responded to his preaching. After several days had passed Bryant found out that Achor also had been a physician, so he sent him some provisions. Mrs. Bryant, out of curiosity, attended the meeting one night and was converted, but she never got her husband to attend. Eventually, through the help of other ministers whom she invited to come, particularly Mary Cole and Lodema Kaser, Mrs. Bryant had been able to lead her husband into a solid Christian experience. He said that almost immediately he began preaching. He turned a dance hall which he owned into a meeting place and began holding services. He also felt the need to reach people in the surrounding communities. That was why he had come to the Meeker Schoolhouse.

This story thrilled Nora Siens. She felt that God wanted her also to be a worker in his kingdom. But she was young, only eighteen, and the opportunities were limited. It soon became apparent, though, that she would have difficulties multiplied if she attempted to do much in her present circumstances. Her relatives were not sympathetic with her new approach to religion. She talked to Dr. Bryant about the matter, and he invited Nora to make her home with them. She gladly accepted, little realizing all that would be involved. Hardly had she moved to her new home with the Bryants when they decided to extend their evangelistic efforts beyond their own community. They began traveling from town to town in revival campaigns, and Nora went with them. For almost a year she accompanied them and gave assistance in the meetings which they held, mostly doing personal work and helping with the music. She then joined the William

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

N. Smith evangelistic party and traveled for several more months.

The summer of 1893 found Nora in Grand Junction, Michigan, the home of the *Gospel Trumpet* about which Dr. Bryant had spoken. She found a number of young people there who were helping in various aspects of the work. More help was needed at this particular time in the Children's Home, so she decided to stay awhile. It was probably while she was here that she preached her first full-fledged sermon. She was exceedingly nervous, as well a nineteen-year-old girl might be. It did not help matters as far as she was concerned to have D. S. Warner in the audience. She apparently impressed him as being quite capable, though, for that fall he asked her to travel in evangelistic work with him and his new wife, the former Frances Miller. She accepted this invitation also.

While with the Warners that winter Nora spent about three months in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was a part of the evangelistic party aboard the *Floating Bethel*, which was a chapel built on a converted flat-boat. This vehicle of evangelism, which was the result of an idea born in the mind of G. T. Clayton, was at the time tied up in the Allegheny River at the Pittsburgh end of the Sixth Street Bridge. Nora lived on the boat with the rest of the workers and assisted in the meetings which were held there every night. While some of the other workers spent the daytime in making house-to-house calls and distributing literature Nora attended business college and conducted children's meetings.

The next two years saw her continuing in itinerant evangelistic work. After leaving Pittsburgh she teamed up with the W. J. Henrys and went to eastern Pennsylvania. They spent several months in various cities

and towns in that area and then went on to Maryland for a meeting in Hickman. While in the East Nora met Lena Shoffner, another woman evangelist. The two of them formed a team of their own and conducted several meetings. Their most fruitful experience was at Federalsburg, Maryland, where a thriving congregation came into being after they held a revival of several weeks.

On November 3, 1896, her shifting from one evangelistic team to another came to an end. Nora Siens became Mrs. Clarence E. Hunter. She had met this tall, mustached young man one summer at the Grand Junction camp meeting. He also had traveled with D. S. Warner as a singer and was quite accomplished in the writing of music. They were married in Cedarvale Chapel near Federalsburg with W. J. Henry performing the ceremony. They formed their own gospel team. For the next three decades they worked together in evangelistic campaigns and in pastorates all the way from Butler, Pennsylvania, to Los Angeles, California. Though both of them were preachers it seemed that most often the major responsibilities fell on Nora's shoulders. In some of their pastorates Clarence would find secular work in order to assist in the finances of the congregation and meet the needs of a growing family. He was forced to drop out of the ministry entirely in the late 1920's, and ill health plus other complications kept him from ever becoming active in the work of the church again. He died in 1945. In spite of these circumstances Nora never ceased to make the work of the church her major business.

During these years of their ministry together the Hunters encountered many difficulties and experienced a great deal of sorrow. The most acute of these sorrows came in regard to their own family. They became

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

the parents of six children, only two of whom survived their father and mother. Paul, the oldest, grew to manhood but died at the age of thirty after they moved to California. Twin daughters became ill and died almost at the same time on the Claypool, Indiana, campground in the summer of 1903. They were sixteen months old. Another daughter died of scarlet fever at the age of fifteen months. Only Robert and Ed remained.

These experiences of great grief had a lasting effect on Mrs. Hunter and made her especially sympathetic to those who were suffering bereavement and heartache. It was this, perhaps, that made personal work such an outstanding feature of her ministry.

In characterizing Mrs. Hunter's work as a preacher and pastor her biographers, Hazel Neal and Axchie Bolitho, lift out one very notable feature. They observe,

Always the pioneer, Nora was not content to be pastor of one church only; she constantly visited Christians in the surrounding countryside, helping them to start Sunday schools, visiting prospects with them, and preaching for their small groups as she had opportunity.

It was this spirit of the pioneer that prompted her to venture into new areas of service and broaden her interests beyond the needs of those for whom she was immediately responsible. Although she was always helping people wherever she could she found particular opportunity to do so in the community where she was starting a new church on the east side of Los Angeles. She lived in what was then a new section of the city where many of the thousands of people who were then coming to the sunny southland were trying to find a place to live. She made contact with the East Los Angeles Health Center and offered her services as a

volunteer assistant in helping the many families who needed homes and help in times of distress. She became practical nurse, employment agency, and spiritual counselor to many, many families who were trying to find their place in this rapidly developing section.

She did not always have the sanction of all the members of her own congregation in regard to these activities, for some of them felt she was spending too much time with these newcomers and neglecting the faithful "saints" in the fellowship of the church. Nevertheless, attendance and interest continued to grow, and a solid foundation was laid for one of the strongest congregations in southern California.

### *A Trip Abroad*

Then in the spring of 1929 something happened which was to alter the course of her life. Her brother Ed who was then in the oil business in San Diego, asked her if she would like to make a trip abroad. He apparently sensed that the pressures of her many responsibilities and problems were bearing down heavily upon her. He thought it might help her if she left it all behind for a while, so he offered to pay her expenses if she would take a trip to Europe and the Holy Land. Whether he then realized it or not, Ed had suggested something which had been a secret dream of Nora's for many years. To visit the Holy Land had been one of her fondest hopes. Without very much hesitation she accepted the invitation and was ready to sail by June.

There was nothing especially exceptional about this trip; that is, nothing more exceptional than such a tour would be for any person interested in visiting the lands where our present civilization was born and

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

nurtured for so many centuries. She was to go as a tourist without any more special privileges than would be accorded any other traveler. The trip was planned by the Travel Institute of Bible Research and included Western Europe, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land. She resolved before starting, however, to make this journey more than just a pleasure trip; she wanted to use it as a means to help her better understand the foreign missionary program of the church and to know firsthand the problems faced by those who are sent into foreign lands to carry the message of the gospel.

In the course of the trip she was given "opportunity" to enter into some of these problems in ways which she had not anticipated. Instead of just observing she became a participant in some of the experiences which Christian workers abroad have to face. More than once she became very homesick. In lands of strange diseases and scant medical care she was ill on several occasions, one time with the dreaded cholera. She endured the hardships of long journeys and slept in some of the most unusual places. She was involved in at least two serious accidents, either of which could have taken her life. More important than these personal matters, though, she was made keenly aware of the great needs of the people in the many countries which she visited. Her heart went out to the thousands she saw who were living in ignorance and poverty, and her soul ached for the thousands more who knew nothing of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The condition which seemed to make the deepest impression on her, though, was the discovery that those who were giving their lives as missionaries were often severely handicapped because the Missionary

Board at home did not have sufficient funds to give them a full allowance. She was also shocked to find that at that time no help whatever was available for aiding national workers who were in reality the backbone for establishing an indigenous church. None of the missionaries or workers she visited had complained, but the handicap was so evident that she could not keep from feeling a stab of guilt about such a situation. After all, this was a responsibility which rested upon the church in America, and it was falling short. How could more workers be sent into these needy fields if the obligation to those already there was not being fulfilled? She was convinced that something must be done.

On the voyage home after five months of travel Mrs. Hunter was in great agony of soul over the situation she had found. Over and over again she asked herself what could be done about the need. She threw off the temptation to dismiss the whole thing by telling herself that this was something for the Missionary Board to solve and was really none of her business. Finally she began asking herself, "What can I do about this situation?" She reviewed the possibilities. She could tell the people what she had seen, she could paint vivid word pictures of outstretched hands and upturned faces, she could plead for help for the faithful missionaries. Yes, she could do all that, and she would do it.

Solemnly she realized, though, that the people already had been told, pathetic pictures had been painted many times, pleas as fervent as she could ever make had been sent forth many times before. Still the needs were not met. What more could she do? Somehow the whole church must be made to go

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

further than just feeling sorry for those who were not reached. The church must *act*! How to inspire the good saints so they would go into action was still the great unanswered question.

She still had no solution when she arrived home, but she did not forget the problem even though she well might have done so. Other pressures bore down upon her almost from the moment she got back to Los Angeles. Circumstances were such that it seemed best to give up her pastoral responsibilities, and the matter of moving posed more difficulties. In the midst of her personal struggles she continued to pray and think about the matter which had rested so heavily on her heart. Any real solution seemed even more remote, however, as the days went by, for the whole country was sinking deeper and deeper into the vicious morass of economic depression. How could people who could not support their own families give more for missions?

One day in her living room she noticed again the cover picture on a *Saturday Evening Post* which she had hurriedly scanned a few days before. The artist had depicted a large tractor-drawn combine cutting a wide swath across a vast field of ripened grain. Across the top of the picture was written its title, "Broader Fields." As she looked at this picture for the second time, it seemed to say something to her. It was as if she were suddenly shaken awake by a new challenge. Here was the kind of vision the church needed. The broad fields needed to be harvested, and the combine was doing the job. She fell into contemplative prayer. The whole matter of full pay for missionaries and release for national workers again became a personal matter with her. She prayed, "Lord, show *me* the way to do it. Help me to find the 'combine.' I'll take the



responsibility for running it if you'll help me know where it is and how it is to be operated."

As she continued in this attitude of prayerful openness a verse from the Psalms which she had read many times seemed to leap into her mind. Half aloud she repeated the words, "The Lord giveth the word; the women that publish the tidings are a great host" (Ps. 68:11, ASV). That was the answer! The women of the Church of God were a great host! All they needed was to be mobilized for action. She began formulating plans as to how this could be done. But she did not act hastily. She gave the idea time to "incubate," and she was often in prayer as to whether this was the right way. Almost two years passed before anything definite began to take shape.

### *A Call to Women*

During the 1931 International Camp Meeting in Anderson, Indiana, Mrs. Hunter was discussing her idea over a lunch table with Mrs. Grace Henry, a friend from New Philadelphia, Ohio. While they were talking they were joined by Mrs. Nichols-Roy of Assam, India. The two ladies with whom Mrs. Hunter shared her burden were enthusiastic, and on the spur of the moment they called a mass meeting of the women on the campground for the next day. About two hundred women responded to the call. When a tentative proposal was placed before them, they wanted to organize immediately, but Mrs. Hunter advised waiting another year. The idea was not new to her, but it was to the rest of the people. They needed to think about it too. Besides, she wanted to be sure of the co-operation of the two missions boards before any

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

definite action was taken. She recommended that a committee be selected to work on plans during the coming months and bring a proposal for action the next year. This was done.

During the year between June, 1931, and June, 1932, Nora Hunter and the other women appointed to work with her did a tremendous amount of work and planning. She wrote many letters, she traveled many miles, and conferred with everybody who might be involved. In January of 1932 a pilot local society was established in the First Church of God in Los Angeles where Mrs. Hunter was then attending. By the time camp meeting came again she was fully prepared to launch her dream on the sea of reality. The events of June, 1932, already described, were the result.

As first president of the National Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of God Nora Hunter was not one to hope that the newly created organization would run itself and produce the desired results automatically. It was her determination that this new structure should really prove its worth by becoming a strong arm of the church. She realized that the establishment of a multitude of "Ladies Aid" societies was not her goal. As she organized local groups she impressed upon the women that they must not become mere fellowship circles and that they must not be content with a piddling program. She quoted Daniel Burnham often: "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood." She told the women that if their mission was to be fulfilled their groups must be producing units with definite and challenging goals.

An elaborate organization was set up with almost enough offices for everybody in an average group.

Projects, ranging all the way from prayer partners to penny-a-day calendars, were put in operation all over the country. Then Mrs. Hunter began the task of making this organization work. She knew of no other way to do it than to go out there where the people lived. She was never cut out to be a swivel-chair executive. She set up her offices in railroad cars (mostly day coaches), in busses, in depots, and in automobiles when she could get someone to transport her. With a briefcase in one hand and a knitting bag in the other she went forth to campaign for the cause which became her "magnificent obsession."

She did not wait to be invited to camp meetings, ministers' meetings, youth conventions, and other assemblies which were scheduled. She just appeared and usually found some place on the program. In all of this campaigning, though, she never made either herself or her cause obtrusive. She never preached Missionary Society; she just preached missions. She did not emphasize organization; she simply told of a job that needed to be done. She talked as much about what was already being done as she did about what was needed.

Mrs. Hunter kept going at a rapid pace for all of the sixteen years she held the office of president. She was never one to tabulate statistics, and so there is no way of knowing how many miles she traveled or the number of meetings she attended. In some of her writings she does mention some of the places she has been. In 1936, for instance, she lists three camp meetings, three youth conventions, three missionary conventions, five ministers' meetings, and "many local meetings" which she attended within a period of a few months. Another time she speaks of attending nine-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

teen camp meetings in one summer. She never slackened her pace, even during the war years when travel was difficult and accommodations often impossible to reserve.

Such dedicated effort could hardly fail to produce results. As more and more local and state groups began functioning Mrs. Hunter could begin to see some of her dreams come true. Toward the end of 1937 she triumphantly announced, "Good news! Good news! Our prayer goal, 'Full pay for the missionaries,' has been realized for the past seven months." But other goals had already been set. There was a constant process of translating budget items into the meeting of specific needs. Projects, educational programs, and many other challenges were constantly kept alive for the mobilized women of the church.

All was not smooth sailing, however. There was criticism at many points and from various sources. Many problems were solved only after errors were discovered through trial. Despite the fact that co-operation with all other agencies in the church had been one of the first principles set forth by Mrs. Hunter, it was not always easy to keep the lines sharply drawn. Accusations were sometimes made which sounded harsh, but she took them calmly and either explained the situation to the satisfaction of her accusers or made adjustments where they seemed advisable. Her constant reiteration of the policy of helping everybody and competing with no one, plus her willingness to make constructive changes in policy, finally convinced nearly all the objectors that she really meant what she said. The years of leadership which she gave to the Woman's Missionary Society unquestionably made this organization one of the strongest work-

ing units in the whole church at all levels from the local to the international.

Nora Hunter was more than an organizer of women's groups, however. She was truly a minister of the gospel. From the 1890's when she was known as "the church's sweetheart" to the closing years of her life she was a radiant witness for the Master. On trains and busses, in waiting rooms, and on the street she looked for opportunities to help people. She scattered tokens of love in the form of oranges and nuts from California and wool afghans which she had knitted herself, all across the country. Whether she encountered a taxi driver, a bootblack on the street, or a seatmate on a train she had a way of sensing when the person was in need and knew the right thing to do about it. Her greatest ability seemed to be in inspiring others to do what God wanted them to do. Her own good example undoubtedly made this helpfulness possible.

Part of Mrs. Hunter's genius as a leader lay in her ability both to fashion and to select pungent phrases and slogans which fired the imagination of others. Though she was not what would be called a dynamic public speaker, she was able to captivate audiences by the warmth of her personality and the use of insight-provoking expressions. "The women were a mighty host . . ." was used over and over again in the early years of the Missionary Society. Later, particularly during the depression years, "What is that in thy hand?" was used to encourage those who had even a little to put it to work for God. The "full pay" and "plan big" slogans were also used to great advantage.

It is in her writing, however, that her living language becomes most vividly apparent. One cannot leaf

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

through her sermon notes, her scrapbooks, or her letters to the Society without being struck with the graphic beauty of expression with which she was gifted. A few random phrases will indicate the picture-producing quality of her expression.

We who have seen the dawn must help others to see the Day Star.

Take root downward and bear fruit upward.

System, not spasm, is God's method.

There is only one way to make dreams come true; wake up and go to work.

You can't stop God.

Pain and disappointment sometimes cut channels into one's life deep enough for streams of living water to flow through to refresh thirsty souls.

Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success.

These could be multiplied. There is little doubt that her artistry with words helped her fulfill God's purpose in her life.

### *Great Concerns*

Nora Hunter was also a woman of great concerns. Actually, there was nothing worth while in which she was not vitally interested, but a few special "burdens" seemed to lay with particular weight on her sensitive soul. The earliest and perhaps most persistent of her concerns was children. Because she herself had been an orphan she was keenly aware that children can suffer and that adverse environmental conditions can defeat the divine destiny of a boy or girl. It was no mere accident that one of the first responsibilities in her ministry was working in the Children's Home in Grand Junction. She chose this task because she loved children. Then in 1894 when she went to Pittsburgh to work with the Warner party

on the *Floating Bethel* she had enough to do with her studies and evangelistic work, but without being told she went regularly into a rough district along the Allegheny and began holding children's meetings. "When my task of several weeks' duration was finished," she later wrote, "I was very, very glad, for it was a fruitful mission. The children became gentle and learned to love Jesus and the Bible." And still again, while in the West she participated in the California Conference on Child Health and Protection and was chairman of the State Committee on Character Education. For two years she was one of the vice-presidents of the California Tenth District Congress of Parents and Teachers. On her trip abroad she was especially cognizant of children and their needs. In her activities of later years she never lost this concern. For a number of years a children's division was maintained in the Missionary Society. One of the most marked books in her library is one entitled *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, which tells the tragic story of children in a world at war.

Another major concern was youth. She was one of the primary leaders in the development of a national youth organization in the Church of God. For several years she served on the nominating committee for convention officers. When the International Youth Convention was held in Los Angeles in 1936 she was spoken of as "the soul of the western convention." Her work as a friend and counselor of students never ceased until shortly before her death. She seemed never to lose the ability to understand the problems of young people and to give the guidance which was needed in each individual case. Because of her great interest in youth as well as children she served well as a member of the national Board of Christian Edu-

## HERALDS OF A BRIGHTER DAY

cation for a period of nine years. To sum it up, one would have to say that Nora Hunter's primary concern was people in their relation to the kingdom of God throughout the world. She was the herald of a "brighter day" for all people everywhere.

It is really difficult to find a convenient stopping place for the story of this great woman, for her work follows after her. Her departure from earth in January of 1951 left a great gap, but it was not a particularly sad occasion, for she had served so long and so well. One can imagine that even now she is finding fulfillment of another dream which she recorded in one of her notebooks. On a scrap of paper appear these words:

Jesus said to me the other day, "When you come up to heaven do you want wheels or wings?" Not five seconds passed till I said joyously, "Wings, if you please, dear Jesus; by all means, wings, for I love to fly."









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